POLYHEDRON™

Newszine Issue 20

RPGA NETWORK

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Contents

About the cover
A nearly indestructable GAMMA WORLD® game Aquabot descends on the unsuspecting mutated inhabitants of the main city of the Radioactivists. Cover by Roger Raupp.

Cover Story

21 Encounters — *by James M. Ward. The GAMMA WORLD® game Aquabot destroys the crystal city of the Radioactivists.*

Special Feature

13 The 384th Incarnation of Bigby's Tomb — *by Frank Mentzer. A "new" module, created for the AD&D® game tournament at the 1984 Winter Fantasy mini-convention.*

Features

6 Cryptic Alliance of the Bi-month — *by James M. Ward. The Healers.*
8 The Proton Weapon — *by Kim Eastland. A new STAR FRONTIERS® game technological item.*
10 The Druid — *by James M. Ward. The archetypical AD&D game druid character.*
21 Women in Role Playing — *by Roger E. Moore. Notes for the Dungeon Master.*
23 Now that it's over — *by Roger E. Moore. Looking back at the GEN CON® 17 Game Convention.*
25 Dispel Confusion — *by Jim Ward, Penny Petticord, and Frank Mentzer.*

Departments

5 Notes from HQ

POLYHEDRON™

NEWSZINE

Volume 4, Number 5
Issue #20

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POLYHEDRON™ Newszine (the official newsletter of TSR's ROLE PLAYING GAME ASSOCIATION™ Network) is published bi-monthly by TSR, Inc. The mailing address is POB 509, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. (414) 248-3625.

POLYHEDRON Newszine welcomes unsolicited submissions of written material and artwork. No responsibility for such submissions can be assumed by the publisher in any event. No submissions will be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope of sufficient size.

POLYHEDRON Newszine is mailed free to all RPGA™ members. Membership rates: 1 year — U.S. Bulk Mail = $10. 1 year — Foreign Mail = $14. 1 year — Foreign International Air Mail = $25. All prices are subject to change without notice. Changes of address for the delivery of subscriptions must be received at least 30 days prior to the effective date of the change to insure uninterrupted delivery.

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Notes from HQ

We've got a lot of important notes this issue, so we'll take it one piece at a time.

GEN CON® Game Fair

Now that we've almost recovered from GEN CON 17 Game Fair, it's time to take a look at the RPGA™ Network activities there. We had a members-only tournament for each of the TSR games currently in print except THE ADVENTURES OF INDIANA JONES™ Role-Playing Game, which was so new we couldn't find any qualified judges. Most of the scenarios were taken from modules soon to be released by TSR, so the judges and players got a preview of adventures yet unpublished.

Due to a computer mixup, our events didn't make it into the pre-registration brochure, so people didn't know how to sign up. Consequently, some of the events were very poorly attended, although a special convention offer we made helped to avert a total disaster. We offered a free ticket to the RPGA Network event of your choice with purchase of a new membership at the regular $12 price or an extension of your existing membership. Those who couldn't get into desired events took advantage of the offer, as well as a few smart people who realized that they could use this to sign up for 4 events per day instead of the 3 they could get through event registration. We got so many new members through that offer alone that we may very well make it a GEN CON Game Fair custom.

While the rest of the con was suffering from no-show judges, the RPGA Network events had almost perfect judge attendance. It just goes to show that RPGA Network judges take their responsibilities seriously and wouldn't dream of letting players down. Our judges will certainly be asked to do more in future years.

Speaking of next year, we're looking at limiting the size of the convention (number of events and attendees). GEN CON Game Fair gets bigger every year, and we're starting to run out of space to put it all. So next year we'll be going for quality instead of quantity. Events from judges with good track records will be accepted readily, but there will be a ceiling on the number of events we can take. We may even go to a pre-registration only system, with no at-the-door registration at all so that we will know how many sign-ups there are for each event and can allocate enough space ahead of time. It gives us a little more control of the situation.

The tournaments

Gee Whiz! I wanted a really dynamite AD&D® tournament this year, so I asked Frank Mentzer to write one for us. The result was "Needle," a 3-round tournament about an obelisk in the jungle. The characters came with full-page background sheets which not only outlined their personalities, but gave each character's perceptions of all the others to promote role-playing interactions. The scenario had a little bit of everything — a maze, a retrieval operation requiring several months of game time and hundreds of workers to complete, a sea battle, political intrigue and trading negotiations, as well as encounters with bad natives and bad puns. Gee Whiz! It was a lot for the DMs to handle, but they all did an excellent job. And as for the final round, all I can say is "Gee Whiz!"

The MARVEL SUPER HEROES game tournament was taken from the upcoming module MH4 "Concrete Jungle" by Bruce Nesmith. For the D&D® tournament, we had part of module CM3 "Sabre River," a Companion level adventure that continues what "Test of the Warlords" and "Death's Ride" started. The STAR FRONTIERS® game event was SFKH3 "Face of the Enemy," by member Ken Rolston. It starts with an investigation of the peculiar happenings with the Moreas, and leads to a full assault aboard the mothership of "the enemy." "Baron of San Andreas" by Troy Denning was the BOOT HILL® game event. For TOP SECRET® game fans we had "Seventh Seal" by Evan Robinson, a frantic attempt to stop a terrorist group from blowing up Los Angeles. Dave Cook provided us with "Rapture of the Deep" (or "Face of the Anemone") as our GAMMA WORLD® game tournament. It featured adventures aboard a truly unique ship with a mysterious mutant who might or might not be on your side. And member Kelley Foote came to our rescue by allowing us to use his scenario as our GANGBUSTERS™ game event. "Federal Crackdown" is a concerted effort by the government to clean up the bootleggers and speakeasys in Lakefront City.

This year we went back to the original RPGA Network scoring system — voting style. For those of you who aren't familiar with it, instead of advancing whole teams, we advance the best few players from each team, as determined by player and DM votes. I don't have the space to explain it in full, but it bears closer examination, so watch for an article within the next issue or two.

We chose a first, second, and third place winner from each of the final round teams and awarded prizes. First place winners received a 1-year membership extension, $10 in gift certificates good at the RPGA Network booth or through mail order, and a set of limited run blue dice with hand-painted silver numbers. Second place winners received a 1-year membership extension and $5 in gift certificates, and third place winners received a 6-month membership extension and $3 in gift certificates. All will receive prize certificates to hang on the wall as soon as we get them in.

If any of you didn't pick up your prizes at the con, drop me a line and we'll send the gift certificates out. The membership extensions are being processed and you will be getting new cards as soon as we can make them.

International scoring points will be awarded for this tournament and the one at Atlanticon. We are currently revamping the system, and we hope to have the player and DM rankings ready for next issue, along with an article explaining how the points are awarded.

Please turn to page 31.

Cryptic Alliance of the Bi-month

The Healers

by James M. Ward

From the chaos of the Ancient wars rose a Cryptic Alliance that was to be a truly calming influence on a world gone mad. The quasi-monastic order calling themselves the Healers were able to give mankind and mutantkind islands of peace and hope in a world beyond recognition.

Geographic location

The main base of the Healers is an island in a body of water that covers what was once greater Chicago. It is a small complex, just a mile in radius. The tree-covered island is rich in natural resources and physical beauty. The Healers have purposely left it in as natural a state as possible. 90% of the complex itself is underground.

Inhabitants

The population in the main complex fluctuates between 2,000 and 10,000 inhabitants, depending on the type of instruction going on. The population is almost evenly divided between mutants and pure strain humans (there is a slightly greater number of mutants). The inhabitants of this island are some of the most powerful and technologically able beings in the world.

History

During the war years, the city of Chicago sank into Lake Michigan. However, the land was in a state of constant physical and social upheaval, and one section of the town rose above the water to became a rather large island. The newly-formed rugged island and the life that developed in the lake itself created a peaceful haven for those who were able reach it.

The complex itself is built from the ruins of a military installation. A great deal of medical equipment was left intact here after the war years. This material was designed for quick learning and easy use by all military personnel. It was also designed to last for years. It became a simple matter for the survivors who found their way to the island to learn the medical techniques. These skills have been passed down through generations.

Early in the history of the island the desire for peace became a driving force. Generation after generation sought to live in harmony with the environment and the beings they came into contact with in the outside world. The medical skills of the islanders became valuable to all outside peoples, and some skills were developed even further than the already high state of the Ancients. The abilities of intelligent mutants only increased the efficiency of the Healers as a whole, and soon medical teams of humans and mutants were doing amazing feats in the field of medicine. All surviving groups who met the Healers realized the value of beings who were able to take care of the sick and wounded. Soon the Healers were welcomed almost everywhere.

About 100 years ago the inhabitants of the island discovered a plant able to generate a sound frequency that soothed all non-intelligent creatures who heard it. The plant's powers were copied, and a special compact sound generator was created for every Healer who left the island. This frequency generator is the group's greatest secret and protection against attack.

Leader of the Healers

Mar Merc

HIT POINTS: 108
RANK: 20
MS: 12
IN: 18
DX: 15
PS: 9
CH: 22
CN: 18

DESCRIPTION: Mar Merc is without a doubt the most amazing pure strain human of the GAMMA WORLD® game age. Her brilliance and dedication to the betterment of the alliance has made it the important force it is in the world.

She is currently 30 years old, and became the leader through her highly capable administrative skills. Having made several extensive field trips in her younger years, she is able to bring a knowledge of the lands of the GAMMA WORLD game that few possess to the island. Her temperance and consideration for all life has become the watchword for this cryptic alliance. Few beings who have met her are able to resist her innate charm and manner. This ability has allowed her to bring outside factions which have been waring for generations to peace.

Her policy of advising but never forcing groups has been highly successful, both on the island and in the world at large. She is now working on several medical projects that will totally reshape the world. If her plans succeed, the damaging influences of radiation will be gradually wiped from the face of the planet. This does not make the Healers very popular with the Radioactivists.

Defenses of the main base

There are several different types of natural defenses that surround the Healer complex. The land around the lake is filled with powerful mutant animals who create problems for any non-Healer who tries to travel through that land.

The aquatic life of the lake is savage and hungry. Once, ten war canoes set out to cross the the lake to raid the island for its supposed riches — none of the canoes made it even half the way.

The above ground portions of the complex are completely covered by forest, making it impossible to spot from the air.

Finally, near the complex is a powerful frequency generator that even soothes most intelligent beings. This device is always in operation, and was especially useful the two times the island was invaded by flying mutants.

Base interior chambers

Many of the mutant inhabitants have unusual digging capabilities. This has allowed the underground portion of the complex to grow to easily fill all the space needs of the inhabitants. There are several huge sections devoted to biological research, sections for surgery, and sections for the study of the physical sciences and many other programs that are almost equal to the achievements of the Ancients.

Concepts and policies

The Healers strongly promote peace and understanding wherever they go. Although they follow the ways of peace, they do not let their followers throw away their lives. All mutants traveling outside the island must have several powerful mutational powers so that they can cope with the dangers and pressures found everywhere in the GAMMA WORLD game. Pure strain humans are always given several different types of stun devices which are created on the island. These allow the Healers to fend off the intelligent creatures who are unaffected by the frequency soother.

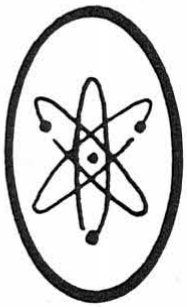
The goals established by Mar Merc are simple but powerful. The Healers are to support all efforts towards peace. Healers are to stimulate studies in science and philosophy. Finally, the Healers are to always present an air of confidence and peace no matter what they feel. It is hoped that these conditions will promote order and bring peace to lands where danger constantly threatens.

Materials common to outside bases

Mar Merc does not encourage the creation of bases throughout the GAMMA WORLD game setting. It has always been her policy to travel light and move often. This has caused the order to become wanderers, moving across the face of the planet, spreading the word of peace and tranquility.

To aid wandering Healers, there are hidden supply areas which only Healers know about. These caches are filled with medical supplies and spare parts for the highly technical medical tools that each Healer carries.

Truly dedicated Healers who leave the island are given the same materials and must complete the training provided at the complex. These beings carry small medical kits which allow them to do quick field operations. In this kit are several packets of powerful medicines, cures for almost all of the diseases known to the world.



The symbol of the Healers

The kit also contains several different types of stun weapons which will usually stop even the most aggressive attacker.

Legends

One of the most vivid and popular legends of the Healers concerns a boy named Lue of the Sky. According to the story, this young lad learned to walk in the sky, and he developed a force that was able to heal the sick and bring peace to the troubled. There are numerous stories concerning this lad, especially about his knack for getting in and out of trouble.

Another popular legend deals with a mutant named Bencassy, who is said to wander the world healing those who have been harmed by radiation. Legend says that a touch of his hand will cure even the worst case of radiation contamination.

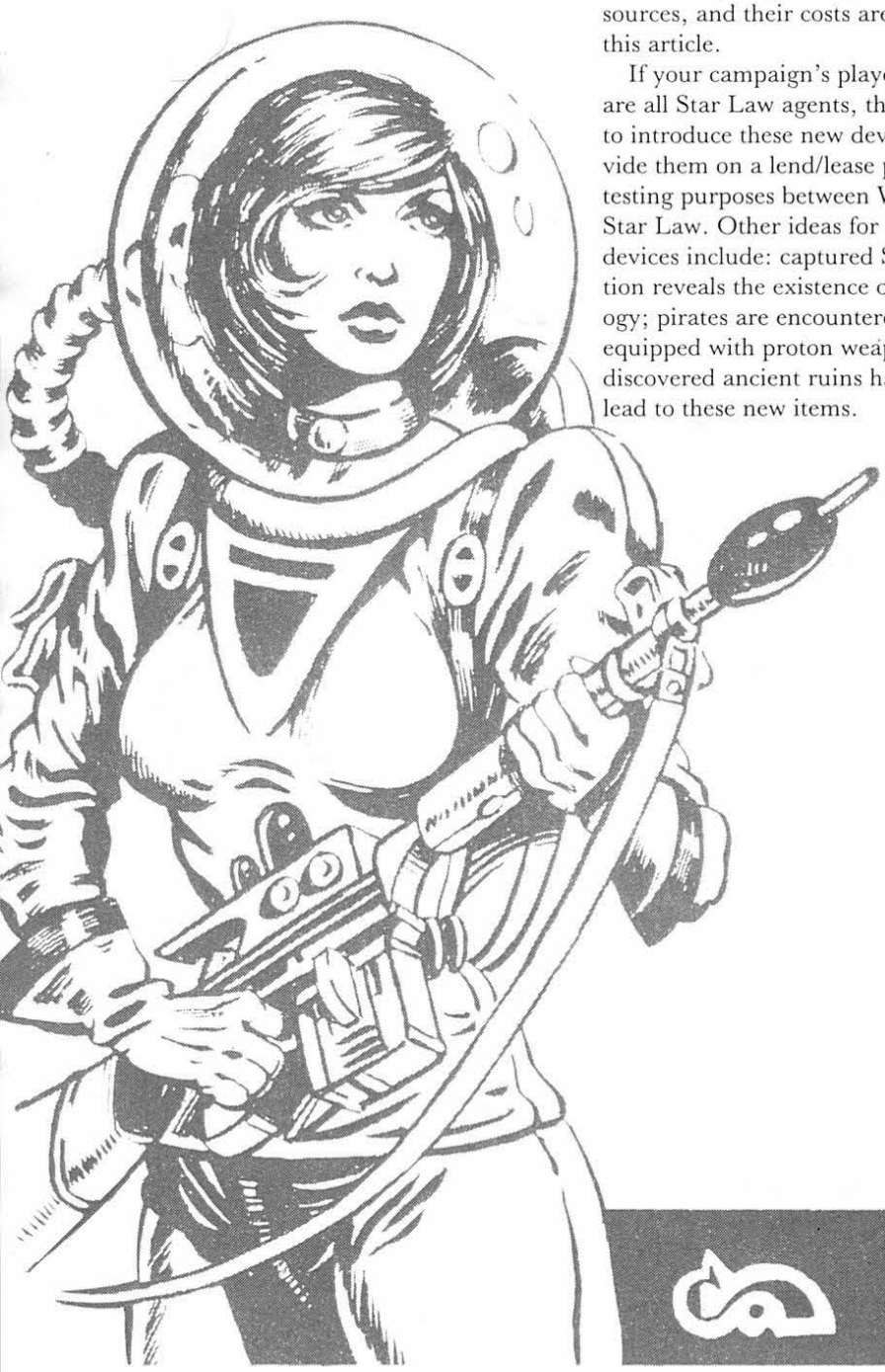
THE PROTON BEAM

A new STAR FRONTIERS® game technological item

by Kim Eastland

New developments in the field of proton emission devices by WarTech, Inc., (see the ARES section in Issue #90 of DRAGON® Magazine) have opened up a whole new area of weapons and defenses. These weapons, armor, new power sources, and their costs are the subject of this article.

If your campaign's player characters are all Star Law agents, then a good way to introduce these new devices is to provide them on a lend/lease program for testing purposes between WarTech and Star Law. Other ideas for introducing the devices include: captured Sathar information reveals the existence of new technology; pirates are encountered who are equipped with proton weapons; a newly discovered ancient ruins has data which lead to these new items.



New ammunition

SEU micro-disc. This variable SEU disc is a smaller version of the standard powerclip. It is roughly the size of a nickel and is usually used in micro-circuited items. The normal SEU use differs with each item.

Mini-powerclip. A smaller version of the powerclip, this 10 SEU unit is about the size of a pack of gum. It is not normally used in items which take standard 20 SEU powerclips. The most common usage for the mini-powerclip is in rafflur weapons.

Weapons

Proton weapons. Proton weapons are usually referred to as "rafflurs" because of their development designation, Rapid Fluctuating Ray. All proton beams are opaque green and appear to send powerful energy waves streaking back and forth to the target. Rafflurs are unusual in that most use only mini-powerclips and cannot be attached to powerpacks (they have a nasty habit of "backcharging" into any power source heavier than a mini-clip, thus blowing them up). Proton beams are attracted to and attack the molecular cohesion of atoms, which sometimes results in a "bending beam," as with the M-4.

Rafflur M-1. This personal defense device is the size of a cigar and contains a SEU micro-disc. Its damage is 4d10+5, and it only fires once. Its range is extremely limited. After it is fired, the micro-disc is disposed of and a fresh one inserted.

Rafflur M-2. The proton pistol is a handgun roughly the size of a laser pistol. Its damage is 2d10 per SEU, and it has a dial that can fire from 1 to 5 SEUs per shot.

Rafflur M-3. This extremely limited production model's damage and SEU usage are identical to the M-2 pistol, but it has design modifications, such as a folding stock and energy modulator, which increases its range and accuracy (+5 to hit modifier).

Rafflur M-4. The official weapon of the Yazarian Elite Forces, the main

advantage of these 75-cm-long weapons is their ability to unleash all 10 SEUs at once in an area effect (like ancient scatterguns). Their beam is cone-shaped, with the point at the gun's muzzle. Since proton beams are attracted to cohesive atomic structure, the first targets in their blast-path usually absorb the damage (if they're lined up perpendicular to the attacker.) To figure out the blast area for targets, take half of the beam's distance between muzzle and the closest target. For instance, a blast striking a target at 16 meters would have a diameter of 8 meters, and anyone within approximately 3.5 meters would also receive the blast, but all individuals behind the first target would be safe. Because of this powerful energy surge, the weapon's circuits superheat, requiring the weapon to cool three turns before reloading with a new mini-powerclip. If the target is wearing a synthvelope, only the first 6 SEUs will be halved, with the remaining 4 SEUs blasting through at normal damage (for easier calculating, just consider 7 SEUs worth of full damage).

Rafflur M-6. The proton rifle is a larger version of the pistol, with a selection of up to 10 SEUs per shot and a longer range.

Rafflur M-8. Designated the LONG RANGE SHARP SHOOTER version of the rafflur rifle, this long-barreled beauty comes equipped with a built-in telescopic sight. It cannot be accurately aimed at anything closer than 15 meters, but it has a truly impressive 500 meter range. An expensive break-down version is often used by big game hunters.

Rafflur M-10. The M-10 is the medium ordnance piece of the rafflur series and the counterpart of the heavy laser. It comes standard equipped with a folding quadpod mount which will safely hold the parabattery used in its operation. The parabattery needs to be held safely because of its unusual feedback prevention circuits and filters. This is the *only* rafflur type which does not use a 10 SEU mini-powerclip. Two humans or one large bio-form are used to transport it. Optional mounting equipment for vehicles, fortifications, etc., can also be purchased.

Helmetic rafflurs. These double projections (one on each side) from the helmet are actually two rafflur M-1s activated by a jaw-tension mechanism. The range is 12 meters maximum, but normal modifiers are used. Two SEU micro-discs are used, one in each unit; damage is identical to two rafflur M-1s. It takes four turns to replace both micro-discs in the helmetic rafflurs. These rafflurs can only be fired where the wearer is looking, and there is a -10 to hit modifier. This action is so simple that it can be completed in addition to other normal actions that turn.

The rafflur series. Please note that the developmental model numbers not in the series — M-7, M-9, etc. are missing so you can create your own rafflur models.

Power screens

The following power screen adheres to all of the basic conditions (shape, size, etc.), as laid down in the DEFENSES, power screens section of the STAR FRONTIERS® Alpha Dawn role-playing game.

Simp Screen. A simp screen performs in similar fashion to an albedo screen and even has a similar silvery aura about it, but it is energized to protect against proton beam fire. For every 6 points (or fraction of 6 points) absorbed, 1 SEU is drained from the power source. For example, absorbing 21 points of damage drains 4 SEU. Any weapon can be fired out of a simp screen. As long as the power holds out, the wearer will take no damage from a rafflur weapon.

Defensive suits

Synthvelope. A synthvelope suit is like a synthetic one-piece envelope that absorbs the damage from proton beam weapons (rafflurs). Like an albedo suit for lasers, each point of damage reflected wears away 1 point of the suit's reflective properties. When it has accumulated 100 points of damage or more, the suit becomes useless. The suit must be stepped into from the back and zipped up, completely encasing the wearer's body except for the head. It is flexible enough for a Dralasite to use.

New item costs

AMMUNITION

Type of Ammunition	Cost (Cr)	Mass (kg)	Energy/ Rounds
SEU Micro-disc	10	—	Variable
Mini-Powerclip	50	—	10 SEU

WEAPONS

Weapon	Cost(Cr)	Mass(kg)
Proton Weapons		
Rafflur M-1	300	—
Rafflur M-2	650	1
Rafflur M-3	825	2
Rafflur M-4	1000	3
Rafflur M-6	900	4
Rafflur M-8	1200	5
Rafflur M-10	5000	20
Helmetic Rafflurs	625	.5

DEFENSES

Type of Defenses	Cost (Cr)	Mass (kg)	Energy Def. Vs.
Power Screens			
Simp Screen	2000	2	1 SEU/Min. proton
Defense Suits			
Synthvelope	500	3	80 points proton

WEAPONS TABLE

Weapon type	Damage	Ammo	SEU	Rate	Defense	PB	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme
Proton Weapons										
Rafflur M-1	4d10+5 per SEU	SEU-Microdisc	All	1	Synth	0-1	2-6	7-10	—	—
Rafflur M-2	2d10 per SEU	10 SEU Clip	1-5	2	Synth	0-5	6-15	16-35	36-70	71-150
Rafflur M-3	2d10 per SEU	10 SEU Clip	1-5	2	Synth	0-6	7-20	21-40	41-80	81-160
Rafflur M-4	Special	10 SEU Clip	10	1	Synth	0-7	8-25	—	—	—
Rafflur M-6	4d10 per SEU	10 SEU Clip	1-10	1	Synth	0-9	10-35	36-75	76-180	181-375
Rafflur M-8	4d10 per SEU	10 SEU Clip	1-10	1	Synth	500-401	400-201	200-51	50-16	15-0
Rafflur M-10	5d10 per SEU	Parabattery	5-25	1	Synth	—	0-120	121-550	551-1100	1101-2200

THE DRUID

by James M. Ward

Persona

Thorn Greenwood is an unusual druid of great power. His clerical parents were slain in a wooded area by a band of orcs, who were in turn driven off by wood elves. The elves sensed the innate power of the young human baby and raised Thorn as one of their own.

From an early age, Thorn fought against the enemies of the forest (especially orcs) with unusual ferocity, and his reputation as champion of the wooded areas spread. Consequently, at the age of fifteen he was "discovered" by a druid initiate of 8th Circle and taken under wing to be taught the ways of druids.

Thorn advanced to be an initiate of the 9th Circle, but left the archdruid to return to the elven forests that he loves. The woods he frequents have become unusually enchanted because of his presence, and his attention and kindness have earned him many allies. A large herd of unicorns roams in these woods, and the herd's stallion has been known to let Thorn ride him in times of great danger. Treants tend the oak and ash trees here, and they take special care of the mistletoe so that Thorn has an unusually fine supply of this wood. Even dryads and nixies are indebted to him for some kindness paid them.

Thorn's kindnesses were not entirely without self interest, however. Thorn learned early that allies were necessary because of the constant attacks from orcs and goblins who live in the nearby mountains. The wood elves had been fighting them for centuries before Thorn came, but it was Thorn who was able to lead the powers of the forest against the orcs, turning the tide of battle in favor of the elves and woodland creatures. For the first time in as long as anyone can remember, the orcs are currently on the defensive.

There are no evil creatures currently living in a 100-mile radius of the forests Thorn calls home. This "woodland renewal" program included the relocation of an ancient green dragon, but that's another story.

To maintain this evil-free atmosphere, the woodland creatures inform Thorn when evil beings invade, and he immediately moves to rid the woods of the menace. When Thorn fights, it is said the trees and grasses rise up to help him . . . and this is literally true.

Skills

Thorn has all the normal druid skills. When changing into a bird, he usually chooses the form of an eagle; his mammal form is usually a badger; and a four-foot-long chameleon is his preferred choice of reptile. He speaks fluently in all the available druidic languages, and he speaks orc and goblin (he learned these last two to better understand the ways of his enemies).

Thorn is highly proficient in the use of a sling, scimitar, and quarter staff. He is an excellent animal trainer and horseman, which is only natural considering

his ability to directly speak with creatures.

Although Thorn has a wide range of spells, there are some he always carries as a matter of policy: *entangle, faerie fire, obscurement, warp wood, neutralize poison, dispel magic, commune with nature,* and *transport via plants.* These spells have stood him in good stead, and are part of his basic trip preparation.

Equipment

Thorn has always traveled very lightly. He makes full use of the forest and its bountiful supplies, and seldom travels out of the woods. He wears forest colors at all times, matching the current season, which gives him a certain amount of camouflage.

He owns a *staff of striking* that a wizard friend of his recharges for him (Thorn saved his life); a *net of snaring, boots of speed,* and a *+3 wooden shield* (a gift from the wood elves). This last item is only taken into situations that Thorn knows are highly dangerous. He commonly carries a sling and scimitar when walking in the forest. These two weapons are of excellent quality, having been designed by elves.

He has three giant badgers for constant companions. These were human followers that died in his service and asked to be reincarnated. Although Thorn couldn't reincarnate them himself, he took them to the archdruid; and in reward for past services, the leader of all druids cast the spells for him. These beasts are powerful and highly intelligent. They roam the general area where Thorn travels; and when Thorn is in trouble, they emerge as secret weapons, usually scaring the daylights out of those who would hurt the druid or any of his followers.

Holdings and possessions

Thorn's one point of vanity is his home, a huge, rambling, 30-room living area. With help from the treants, he made his home out of living oak trees; the walls and ceiling are all living trunks and branches. The main hall has held 100 guests on high feast days. The leaves of the trees have formed themselves into the shapes of beasts and enchanted creatures so his home is decorated in living sculptures. Fruit and edible seed plants happily grow along all the walls and give their bounty willingly. In short, the structure is magnificent.

He lives there with four apprentice druids, a group of followers which includes two rangers also in training, five female fighters, seven wood elves, a bard, and ten human servants. At any given time there are several guests in the hold. These have included wizards, lords, and nobles from distant regions, powerful elves of all types, and several halflings who have come to learn druidic ways.

Thorn has acquired rich rewards in his travels, but considers gold and silver of little value. It just seems to come his way unasked. In the past he has been given huge chests of silver from elves he has aided, coffers of gems from human lords whose lands he has freed from he ravages of displacer beasts, giant lynxs, and worgs.

The greatest contributors to his horde are treants, who just don't like material goods; they give treasure to Thorn just to get rid of it, or for him to use for the good of the area. This wealth is in turn given freely by Thorn to help the cause of druidism everywhere.

Thorn shrinks from his reputation as a champion of men. In his youthful wanderings he cleared many a forest of evil influences. These actions earned him the reputation as a hero among humans. Legends spread about his feats, and now his help is often sought by people of great power. He feels compelled to honor some of these requests, but he truly hates to leave his homeland. His attachment to his homeland has caused him to limit his aid to those persons and situations where nature, as well as humankind, is being attacked.

ANTHER JINSANG

ARMOR CLASS: *5*
MOVE: *12″*
HIT POINTS: *62*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *1*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Magic weapons, spells*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Druidic resistance, spells*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
SIZE: *M* (6′ tall)
DRUID: *9th level*
ALIGHNMENT: *Neutral*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
S: 11 I: 15 W: 17 D: 16 C: 16
CH: 17

Anther is a female druid who roams the forests looking for unusual trees. She has catalogued over twenty types of magical and enchanted trees, and has discovered the location of thirteen dryad oaks.

Outdoor adventures are Anther's greatest joy, and despite the danger, she constantly talks her campanions into looking into mysterious groves or poking into some enchanted lake or stream. She dislikes dungeon adventures and will go on them only if promised several above ground excursions in return. She hasn't had much luck with underground areas, having been carried out of dungeons several times near death.

Anther dreams of creating the perfect druid grove and spends a great deal of time and effort in this pursuit. She has taken seeds from some unusually large oaks and planted them in the area where she wants the grove to grow. Her adventuring friends have helped her clear unwanted creatures from the surrounding lands, but she is currently searching for treants to help her in this task.

Whenever she is not adventuring to gain skills and power she is at work in her grove. It has already gained fame in distant lands for its beauty and unusualness. The archdruid herself has come for a visit and approved of the things Anther is doing.

Anther fights with simitar and shield. She can also use darts to great effectiveness. Her only magical items are a *ring of invisibility* and a *ring of shooting stars.* The unusual purple sparks that fly out of her ring have caused her to take to wearing different shades of purple wherever she goes.

Her equipment always includes fresh herbs of several types, strong wine, a trained hawk, and two small potted rose bushes she uses in her *plant growth* spell.

Anther also owns two giant boars which she is training as guards for her grove.

NEVILLE SPARHAWKE

ARMOR CLASS: *4 (chain and shield) plus dex.*
MOVE: *12″*
HIT POINTS: *43*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *1/round*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type, (+1 strength bonus)*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Turns undead as a 4th-level cleric*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *10′ radius* protection from evil *(paladin ability); makes all saving throws at +2 to die roll (paladin ability)*
SIZE: *M (5′8″)*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful Good*
PALADIN: *6th-level paladin*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
SPECIAL ABILITIES: Detect evil *up to 60′ (paladin ability)*
S: 16 I: 14 W: 15 D: 16 C: 15 Ch: 18

Neville is a 26-year-old male, raised and educated by the Brothers of St. Elsbeth, a sect of the Religion of Oghma (see the section on Celtic Religion in the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopedia). The sect instilled in him a sense of justice and order. Even-tempered, sharp-witted, and dedicated, Neville has assumed the role of protector to the small village which has sprung up around the Shrine and Chapel of St. Elsbeth. A deeply religious man, he willingly donates one-fifth of his personal income to that sect.

In addition to his interests in the religious order and the town's welfare, Neville raises and trains hunting falcons, earning as much as 2,000 gp per year for his efforts. He also collects historical books and maps. He speaks dwarvish, having learned it as a child from the dwarves who traded goods in his village.

When patrolling the area around the borders of the village, Neville wears chain and shield emblazoned with the symbol of Oghma, and carries both a longsword and a shortsword (he is proficient in both). At times he may carry a lance as well, and is a formidable opponent, particularly when mounted on his warhorse, Magnum (AC 5, 37 hp). When on foot, Neville carries a longbow and a quiver with twelve arrows.

While on an adventure some years ago, he acquired a vial which contained a *potion of extra-healing.* He has a sufficient quantity of it to be used as two doses, but he prefers to not use it if possible. The vial is wrapped securely in several layers of quilted cloth inside a pouch tied to his belt. He keeps a small hoard of coins and gems (totalling approximately 8,000 gp) in a locked chest in his small tower at the edge of the village.

He employs a middle-aged couple to keep his tower in order and to take care of the falconry while he is adventuring or patrolling. Jacques and Emily are exceedingly loyal to him, although their reasons for this may be attributed more to the gold he pays them than their altruism.

Created by Robert Waldbauer

CYLENE SILENTWOOD

ARMOR CLASS: *0*
MOVE: *12″ (see below)*
HIT POINTS: *42*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *1 (2 with bow)*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Spells*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Spells, magical devices*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard (see below)*
SIZE: *M (5′8″)*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
DRUID: *9th level*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
S: 12 I: 11 W: 17 D: 16 C: 15 Ch: 16

Cylene is a druidical priestess of Artemis, the Greek goddess of the hunt. She lives by herself in a small forest that she defends fiercely as her sacred wood, permitting no humans, demi-humans, or humanoids to enter the forest or disturb its inhabitants.

Cylene retired from active adventuring after many successful quests for her deity, but she still goes on special missions that her superiors in the cult feel must be accomplished; the details of her missions are sent to her by animal couriers.

Cylene wears only a light, belted garment and soft boots; her protection in combat comes from a set of *bracers of AC2* and a *ring of spell turning.* As a druid of Artemis, she was allowed to use a longbow when she reached 6th level, and she carries a fighting staff and dagger (+1) as well. Her adventuring has brought her numerous minor magical rings, her favorites being the *rings of invisibility* and *mammal control.*

Being on good terms with the sprites of her wood, Cylene is allowed to make limited use of their sleep poison on her arrows; she will carry enough for 2-8 uses at any one time.

It is said that deep in Cylene's forest is a nexus point leading to an alternate universe, and that Cylene herself serves as a guardian of the nexus. Offerings of magical arrows, rings, or clothing might convince her to let neutral parties make use of the gateway if her goddess permits (the casting of a *commune with nature* spell will tell).

Created by Anna Konicek

HUMPHREY

MODIFIED ARMOR CLASS: *-1*
MOVE: *12″*
HIT POINTS: *28 (34)*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *1*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *Spells only*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Spells*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *None*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *None*
SIZE: *4′10″*
ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic Good*
MAGIC-USER: *6th-level magic-user*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
S: 11 I: 17 W: 13 D: 17 C: 16 Ch: 13

At first, Humphrey appears to be nothing more than an obnoxious teenager. In actuality, he is middle-aged, a noble's son who accidentally drank a *potion of longevity.* Bored with the idea of following in his father's footsteps, Humphrey forfeited his claim to his father's title. Instead, he wanders the continent in search of entertainment. He needs the rich monetary rewards of adventuring to support his extravagant tastes in food, wine, and clothing. He has even adapted common magic items to maintain a high level of luxury for himself even in the midst of a dungeon. His favorite magic item is a *portable hole* wine cellar.

Humphrey is incredibly conceited, believing, among other things, that only he is a true connoisseur, and he constantly reminds any party that he travels with of this. Since Humphrey believes that the use of brawn over brains to be gauche, he delights in berating fighters. He considers barbarians to be the scum of the earth.

Humphrey often pouts and refuses to cast spells when he feels he has been treated poorly. Consequently, he has few friends, except for his pseudo-dragon familiar. His sharp tongue and snobbishness don't endear him to many. However, if a character he is fond of is in danger, Humphrey is a steadfast ally.

Created by Adrien Saks

For the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Game

THE 384th INCARNATION OF BIGBY'S TOMB

by Frank Mentzer

An AD&D® ADVENTURE for characters levels 15-25

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Players' Background

Centuries ago, in the times of shadow, the magical arts had waned until few were known, and they only by a select group. Bigby was one of these, yet even he had lost much of the old lore and was forced to craft new magicks to replace the old.

As sometimes happens to Great Powers, Bigby ran afoul of a powerful evil patriarch who laid a curse upon him. It was a subtle curse, nearly undetectable: Bigby was unable to acquire any potions of longevity, the elixirs of life itself.

After years of normal life, the archmage began watching for these rare draughts, aware that only they could extend his years beyond the allotted span. But the unknown curse remained, and Bigby began to worry when no potion appeared. Magical scrying, hired thieves, conjured servants — all failed.

Concentrating his resources, Bigby was only able to discover the existence of the curse, but not its donor, nor any of the elusive potions. Near the brink of despair, he kept to seclusion and pondered the problem for years. It was thought that he had died, for he remained absent for over a decade.

A morose party of adventurers, returning from the mountains in the northlands, brought news of Bigby's existence. They had found a dungeon, a place filled with deception and death. However, their resources were many, and the survivors finally entered a final chamber deep within; it contained a glass box, its invisible contents including the body of an old man.

After a fierce fight with guardians, they managed to awaken the figure, who revealed himself to be none other than Bigby — and who then asked for a potion of longevity. The group had owned one of such, but sadly, it had been broken in the passage through the dungeon!

The archmage had time only to reveal three things to the intruders — that he rested within an artifact, designed to protect him until potions of longevity were brought (preferably several); that the artifact created a new dungeon each time a creature entered the doorway, each more dangerous than the last; and that the party was about to receive some very odd but harmless sensations.

Bigby was suddenly back in his box, and the party was spun about by irresistible forces. They found themselves moving backwards, as if traveling the paths of time in reverse. They replaced treasures found; slain monsters arose about them. They found themselves outside the entrance once again. Those who had died in the dungeon were now here — but still dead, with no apparent wounds.

Their trek south was long and arduous, fraught with danger from the denizens of the icy peaks. Once back in town, the raising of the slain was quite expensive, and two did not make it; the only treasure recovered was found in a mountain creature's lair, barely enough to pay for the magic items lost and used on the journey. The possessions of the permanently dead were sold to pay for the clerical services needed; all in all, a disastrous and unprofitable affair.

But some still try to penetrate the hazards of Bigby's tomb, despite the perils. It is said that the rewards for success are great; in addition to the great treasures within the Tomb and the recovery and good will of Bigby himself, the rescuers would certainly receive the lost spells of Bigby's creation, now completely unknown to the world's mages and sages.

It is two hundred and ten years since the discovery of the "Tomb." You have a map showing its approximate location. Will you hazard the test?

Notes for the DM

This adventure is designed for a party of 5-10 characters of levels 15-25, using standard ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game rules. Any party trying to penetrate this complex should have at least one magic-user, cleric, thief, and fighter, all of level 15 or higher, all appropriately equipped. Magic-users may neither have nor use any "Bigby" hand spells, due to the scenario background. Certain magic items may prove to be quite useful, including several *potions of longevity*, a *rod of smiting, staff of curing*, and *rings of fire resistance* and/or *warmth*. Do not, of course, tell these things to the players, but note that chances of character survival may be minimal if these items are not present.

The preface vaguely places the dungeon in "mountains in the northlands." Place it in a suitable area of your campaign map, modifying the clues accordingly.

The player information may be introduced by a treasure map, found in an old notebook, through research by a sage, legend lore, or simply through casual conversation (in a tavern, castle, etc.).

A bonus XP award of 50,000 points is suggested as suitable for a party that succeeds in releasing Bigby (in addition to points gained from treasure and monsters). The bonus should be evenly divided among all participants, including those slain but magically recovered afterward. If Bigby is awakened but not recovered, a 10,000 XP bonus should still be awarded, as the party will have no other reward.

The dungeon itself is created by the artifact guarding Bigby's rest. The artifact creates and runs the various illusions found within; some encounter notes may specify occurrences at a time "most convenient," giving you, as DM, great freedom in running them.

Special Notes

Passwall, rock to mud, animate object, polymorph object, etc.: Any spell affecting the material of the dungeon itself will work, but the magic will be negated by the artifact 1-4 turns later. This applies only to objects and materials, and *cannot* restore *disintegration*.

Find the path: If used in this dungeon, this spell reveals the most direct route — through the Foyer (#7) and the Hall (#11), to the secret door down to the tunnel (#16), and in from there. It *does* negate the appearance of the False Tomb, leading the party to the true one immediately.

Planar travel: The ethereal plane adjacent to the dungeon is warped by the artifact, producing a *maze* spell effect. Anyone entering the ether within the dungeon, or attempting to enter the dungeon from any other plane, becomes trapped in this maze automatically. As with the spell, victims can find their way out in a short time (from 1 round to 8 turns, depending on Intelligence), but the only exit leads to a point just outside the dungeon entrance.

Psionics: Several creatures are lurking in the ethereal maze. They will not bother intruders either there or within the dungeon unless true psionics (not spells of similar effect) are used. If psionics are used, however, they will attack, either singly or in small or large groups (DM's discretion). They include 3 brain moles, 12 cerebral parasites, and 3 thought eaters. (See *MM1*, pages 11, 14, and 94 for details.) If these are dispatched and psionics continued, 2 mind flayers (*MM1*, page 70) will show up. If they are slain, the artifact itself may attack (psi strength 300/300, modes all/all). If defeated, the artifact will no longer produce illusions, and its "brain" (the cubes in area #19) will be dark and inactive when found. Bigby will be quite irritated if this occurs. The "brain" regains 24 points per hour of rest (regardless of the result of psionic combat; it is immune to insanity and death) but will not reactivate until at full power.

Dungeon Standards

A standard corridor is 10′ high, 10′ wide, with smooth stone, and no lighting. A standard door is wooden with metal strips, sheathed metal hinges, latch with keyhole below, but NOT locked unless noted.

Standard abbreviations are used throughout, including saving throws vs. spells and wands (STs and STw, respectively) for creatures.

The term "magical sight" includes *detect invisible, true seeing*, and other similar effects. It does *not* include infravision. In the Encounter Key, dimensions and descriptions are given without regard to limited vision; modify and/or restrict the information as needed.

Modifications

If your party is exceptionally powerful, an additional twist may be added. The artifact may delay all devices, causing their effects to appear 1 round later than expected. This should *not* be applied to spells or potions, merely magical devices of all sorts. Example: A magic-user shoots a *wand of fire* at trolls; nothing happens. The character puts the wand away, and begins a spell; the wand then shoots the *fireball* (probably at the floor . . .). For further confusion, you may assign a chance of this occurring and check each use. Keep

careful track of the segments of time needed to activate devices, for accurate comparison to casting times and possible subsequent disruption of concentration.

Replays

If the party fails in its mission, *or* if it leaves the dungeon and tries to return after resting, the artifact will redesign the area completely. True to its instructions, it will create a dungeon even more deadly than this one. The new area is left to the DM's imagination, but should be of the same overall size (400′ north-south, 250′ east-west, 50′ maximum thickness) and nastier. Try to use a minimum number of creatures for maximum effect; no other-planar creatures should be included, except in the ethereal maze.

ENCOUNTER KEY: Bigby's Tomb #384

1. Entrance

The empty doorway is 7′ wide and 10′ high, leading into the base of a high cliff. The terrain around the doorway is barren and rocky, sloping upward toward the cliff. Horses may be safely tethered 90′ from the entrance, in some light woods downslope from the entrance.

From the doorway, a corridor leads 30′ north to a 4-way intersection, with corridors extending 120′ to the north, east, and west, each ending in a normal door.

When the 4-way intersection is entered, a *programmed illusion* of a magic-user 90′ to the east casting a *lightning bolt* (rubbing a crystal rod with a piece of fur) begins. The bolt will pass through the intersection, ending 30′ west of it; it is 5′ across, 80′ long, and can inflict 9d6 points of electrical damage. However, a successful saving throw indicates a complete miss, as the bolt is narrow, and passes 3 feet off the floor. Give the characters the benefit of the doubt if any attempts at evasion occur; this encounter is very effective if nobody is actually hurt by the bolt. Note that this illusory character appears regularly in the dungeon and keeps everyone nervous if believed.

If a spell is cast within 30′ of the intersection, or at a time most convenient, a secret door above the outside entrance opens, releasing a rust monster which will land outside the entrance and attack metal nearby.

Rust Monster: AC 2, M 18, HD 5, AT 2, D Rust, STs14/STw13; THAC0 15; hp 35

The creature's alcove over the entrance is a rough cave, approximately a 15′ cube, and contains four leather sacks. These are soaked with poison, and a failure at *remove traps* (or any touch) requires a saving throw or death results. The sacks contain normal sling stones, 30 per sack.

2. North corridor

This passage appears 120′ long, ending in a door, but actually extends only 10′ and ends in a blank wall. When the *hallucinatory terrain* at the end is touched, an invisible *wall of force* appears 5′ from the end wall. Any *dispel magic* spell will cause it to vanish, but also automatically affects those trapped behind it (at standard chances of dispelling potions, spells in effect, etc.). The *wall* will disappear by itself 35 rounds after its creation, and the illusion on the wall reappears at that time (and the whole thing resets).

3. West corridor

This passage appears 120′ long, ending in a door, but actually extends only 40′ and ends in a blank wall. The *hallucinatory terrain* at the end covers not only the wall but also the last 10′ of corridor floor, which is missing. The pit actually there is 60′ deep, with sharp steel spikes on the bottom covered with poison. Anyone falling on the spikes must first make a saving throw vs. death, with a -4 penalty, or die instantly. In addition, the victim takes 6d6 falling damage and is hit by 2 spikes per AC (rear, i.e. without Dexterity or shield); each spike inflicts 1d6 damage, and each requires a separate saving throw vs. poison with a -2 penalty to the roll, or death results.

4. East corridor

The diagonal wall section is a highly polished slab of thin stone, acting as a perfect mirror. (This phenomenon recurs wherever a diagonal wall section exists in the dungeon, called a "mirror wall.") The visual effect is that of straight corridor, though the twisting passage leads north to an actual door, 120′ from the first intersection. Those on the other side of this hinged wall can see through it, and will push it open (closing off the northern passage) at the best opportunity to surprise one or two intruders. These lurking observers are simply 2 trolls, *hasted* by the artifact:

Trolls: 2, AC 4, M 12, HD 6+6, AT 3(6), D d4+4/d4+4/2d6, STs13/STw12; THAC0 13 (9 with *haste*); hp 50, 45

They have a base 90% chance of surprise. A *detect evil* reduces this to normal chances, revealing something behind the wall; magical sight reduces surprise in like manner, revealing faint cracks along the edges of the mirror wall.

When opened, the mirror wall fastens itself to the north wall, sealing that corridor. It cannot be opened from the north by force; a *knock* spell can open it, and a push from the south causes it to "Click!" and swing free once again.

Note that if the trolls gain surprise and ambush the last member(s) of a party, each troll attacks 6 times per surprise segment. Assume that their roll for determining the number of segments is a 6 (on 1d6, compared to a random roll for the victims; if a 6 is rolled for the party, reroll until a 1-5 results).

The *haste* (treated as 25th-level magic) is removable by a *dispel magic* effect at standard chances of success, or more easily countered by a *slow* spell. Note also that in preparation for their attack, the trolls have been poking each other regularly, getting their regeneration going; they will thus regenerate 6 hp/round (due to *haste*) starting with the first round of melee.

If slain but not damaged by fire or acid, the trolls can be permanently burnt by using three flasks of oil per troll. Otherwise, require one flask per 10 hit points of troll to be burned.

Once freed, the hinged mirror wall, which is sturdy and not easily broken, will swing easily either way, with little pressure. It is 1′ thick and made of a crystalline rock which is nearly transparent when viewed from the unpolished side.

5. Fluff

The western door to this room is locked and trapped by a large bucket of tar over it; this will fall on anyone entering by that door. It is also connected to a trip wire which passes into and down inside the wall, and out across the floor to the center of the room. It cannot be seen, however, as the floor is covered with white fluffy feathers, 1½ feet deep. Tiny bugs are on all the feathers, notable only by magical sight; they cause no damage, but infect all passing through the feathers with a mild skin disease (preventing magical curing until removed). Thorough washing will remove the bugs, but not the disease. A *cure disease* effect will both remove the disease from and slay the bugs on the recipient.

The feathers are easily disturbed by the opening of any door, and float about in the air for 1 turn, limiting normal vision to 3′ range but not obscuring infra- or magical vision. They are likewise disturbed by anyone walking through the room. Anyone tarred and feathered by this room is automatically surprisable due to problems with vision and hearing.

Five gems (each worth 100 gp) lie on the floor in the northeast corner of the room.

The feathers do not burn well; if touched by fire, they give off a poisonous smoke in a volume depending on the amount burned. Any tarred and feathered figure set afire causes 100 cubic feet of smoke, and takes 3d6 fire damage per round for 4 rounds from the burning tar.

6. Lair

The trolls in area #4 are from this area, which contains five more of their ilk and the lair treasure.

Trolls: 5, AC 4, M 12, HD 6+6, AT 3, D d4+4/d4+4/2d6, STs13/STw12; THAC0 13, hp 50, 45, 50, 45, 50

Their treasure is scattered about the room and includes 2,000 sp, 4,000 gp, five gems (each 1000 gp), two jewelry (each 2500 gp), a *potion of extra healing, bag of holding* (70 cu.ft., 500 lb.), and a *necklace of 5 missiles* (*fireballs*, HD 3, 3, 5, 5, 7).

DM note: The *necklace* may cause problems in area #12. Keep track of what is done with each magic item, without giving any clue as to which you are most concerned about.

7. Foyer

All doors to this room are locked. The 10′-wide, 30′-long pool of water in the center of the room is only 5′ deep, but magical. Anything falling into it is affected as if by a *dispel magic* effect from a 25th-level caster; check all potions and spells in effect once per round of immersion. Even permanent items will not function while wet, but their magic returns 1-4 rounds after removal. Most permanent items are not adversely affected, but any intelligent item (e.g. sword) may become non-intelligent — a 10% chance per round of immersion (not cumulative).

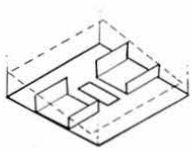
There are both magical and mechanical traps in the room. Anyone entering the room must make a saving throw vs. spells (*mind attack*), with a -4 penalty; if failed, the victim jumps into the pool and willingly remains there until everyone else in the area has also become immersed. The victim will do nearly anything to gain this result, but cannot leave the pool while affected by this dweomer. The effect ends when all party members have bathed here, but is removable by a *dispel magic* (again, vs. 25th-level magic use).

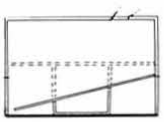
The 10′ square sections of floor before the north and south doors are mechanical traps. Anyone stepping on either one may slide into the pool, as the floor sections pivot to slope downwards. Surprise indicates automatic sliding; otherwise, a saving throw vs. wands may be made, with a -4 penalty but including Dexterity bonuses, to jump aside and avoid the trap.

8. East square

Any dwarf may, on close inspection, succeed in noting that the ceiling of this room may slide; a *find traps* will indicate both the center area and the ceiling to be mechanical traps. Magical sight will not, however, reveal any traps.

The secret door in the east wall of the center cube runs from floor to ceiling; magic is detectable within the center (a dagger). The secret door is propped up, and falls if touched; if so, the center section splits in half, each part falling outwards (north and south; it has no top). At this time, the ceiling falls, landing on the fallen parts of the center section. Note that the west wall of the center splits down the middle, forming two 5′-tall walls, but the east parts are only 2′ high (without the 3′-wide secret door); the ceiling thus lands slanted eastward, about 8′ up at the west end and 1′ up at the east end. (See diagrams below.)





Two ghasts "ride" the ceiling down, and will attack anyone in the area — to the east, first, then crawling up the "ceiling" to the west if necessary. They have no treasure. Note that any touch causes paralysis, even to elves (saving throw applies), and that the ghasts emit a stench; all within 10′ must save vs. poison or suffer a -2 penalty to all "to hit" rolls (while within the stench).

Ghasts: 2, AC 4, M 15, HD 4, AT 3, D d4/d4/d8, STs16/STw15; THAC0 15; hp 30 each

When things quiet down, the treasure under the fallen secret door can easily be found: one *dagger +1* and five gems, each worth 100 gp. The new ceiling height of the room is 20′, with a small cave opening near the top; this is an entrance to the ghast lair, located above the dungeon proper. If entered, a tunnel can be found leading to an cave (no treasure, scraps of victims) and another tunnel to the hidden area above the West Square (#9).

9. West square

This area is identical to that in the East Square (#8) in all respects, with the addition of a secret door in the south wall, which is trapped.

Ghasts: 2, AC 4, M 15, HD 4, AT 3, D d4/d4/d8, STs16/STw15; THAC0 15; hp 30 each

10. Control

The secret entrance to this room is trapped by a *fire trap* spell. It detonates if touched or passed (or by an unsuccessful *remove traps* attempt), inflicting 26-29 (1d4+25) points of fire damage in a 5′ radius (saving throw applies). Treat it as a 25th-level effect for *dispel magic* calculations.

If the door is opened, a *programmed illusion* begins. The elusive magic-user is seen in the room, near the levers to the east; he gasps, grabs the center lever, pulls it, and disappears (apparently teleporting out). This will all occur before the party can react. The lever immediately returns to its upright position, and the illusion ends.

The room is empty except for the three levers in the north wall. The northern lever can (magically) raise or lower the ceiling in area #9; the southern lever has the same effect on room #8. The center lever bestows a massive shock to the user, who must make a saving throw vs. death or die; even if successful, the victim takes electrical damage equal to half his or her original hit points. It can be detected as magically trapped, but the trap is permanent and not removable.

If any two levers are touched at the same time, the victim is affected in the same manner as by touching the center one alone.

11. Hall

Be sure to read this description and that of the following area (12. Watcher) before running any part of this encounter!

The ceiling of this large area is 30′ high, supported by five pillars, each 5′ in diameter. All surfaces — floor, walls, ceiling, and pillars — are ornately decorated and inscribed with tiny runes and symbols. (They are meaningless, but this cannot be determined until a spell-user examines them for 3 turns, magical aids notwithstanding.)

The room is cold, obviously due to the brown mold on the east and west walls and the floor near them. The mold extends 5′ up each side wall from the floor, and 5′ out on the floor from each wall, for the entire 70′ length of the hall. (For details on the mold, see #12, below).

A massive pair of double doors, each 15′ wide and tall, fills most of the north wall; before them lies a huge pile of treasure, some items glowing. The pile is 5′ tall, 30′ across, and made of thirty or forty thousand miscellaneous coins, with dozens of magic items — glowing swords and daggers, wands, potions, chain and plate armor, et al.

DM note: If any magical light comes within range of the doors, *or* if any noise of any sort is made within 50′ of the doors, *or* if anyone or anything visible comes within 10′ of the pile, the watcher behind the doors starts casting spells (as described in #12, hereafter). Four rounds later, it starts watching the intruders by *clairvoyance*. (Note also that this spell will not detect a magic-user protected by a *mind blank* spell or an illusionist with *non-detection* in operation, and that other effects may interfere — such as an *amulet of proof against detection and location*.)

Nothing in the room is trapped, including the pile and all the

items therein. The doors are not trapped, and magical or mundane trapfinding will *not* reveal any clue to the situation to come. A *detect evil* will, however, penetrate the doors, revealing a very evil source behind them, but not its size.

Except for the coins, all the items in the pile are magical. The pile contains the following: 20,000 cp, 10,000 sp, 2,000 ep, 2,000 gp, *chain mail +1, plate mail +1,* 3 *shields +1,* 24 *arrows +1,* 2 *hammers +1,* 4 *longswords +1,* 5 *daggers +1; potions of water breathing, sweet water, superheroism, speed, healing* (x3), *fire resistance, extra healing* (x2), and *climbing* (x2); *wands of wonder* (33 chg), *negation* (14 chg), *magic detection* (18 chg), and *enemy detection* (41 chg); buried deep in the pile are a *ring of free action, staff of curing* (24 chg), and a *rod of resurrection* (10 chg).

If anyone approaches the pile, the red dragon behind the doors (watching via *clairvoyance*) may decide to open them. It will try to wait until most of its victims have approached the pile. (See continued notes below.) If may even allow intruders to steal an item or two at a distance (such as with an *unseen servant*), hoping to lure them closer to the doors.

12. Watcher

Behind the double doors at the north end of the hall, a red dragon waits, probably with a *clairvoyance* spell in use (see below). When the intruders are within the hall, preferably near the pile of treasure, it presses one of the two trigger plates on the side walls (see map), causing the double doors to slide to the sides. The dragon gains surprise in this maneuver on a roll of 1-3 (on 1d6). It immediately announces (in Common) "Drop all your magic items on the pile, or I'll breathe on ya, and you'll be quick-burnt and flash-frozen in an instant!" Magical sight or close inspection will reveal the dragon to be greenish-red, its color oddly changed by wispy small greenish flames.

After noting the party's arrival (either by light or noise, as given in #11), the dragon casts (in this order) *shield, detect magic, fire shield,* and *clairvoyance* before opening the door. After casting the last, it has 12 rounds remaining on the *fire shield,* 20 rounds on the *detect magic,* and 52 rounds on the *shield.* It will open the doors before the *clairvoyance* runs out. Keep track of the durations of the other spells. The beast may be engaged in some conversation, but will automatically attack if the *fire shield* runs down to 5 rounds remaining.

The dragon will allow the intruders to leave, poorer but undamaged, if they leave 75% or more of their magic items here.

Modifications: Dragon statistics are given for 7 points per die. If the party is very powerful (e.g. 150 or more character levels, or at the DM's discretion), use 8 hp/die, for STs4/STw3, breath 88 points, and add *polymorph other* to its spells (which it may use to turn an intruder into a small red dragon, hopefully permanently).

Red dragon: AC -1, M 9/24, HD 11, AT 3, D d8/d8/3d10, STs6/STw5*; THAC0 10, hp 77; breath 90′ × 30′ *Also see notes below.

Aura: Intruders of 6 or more hit dice may ignore aura effects; others may become afraid (see *MM1,* page 30, for details).

Attack forms: With certain attack forms against the dragon, a +1 or -1 modifier applies to both damage done (per die) and "to hit" rolls (if applicable), as follows: air -1; earth +1; fire -1; water +1. These modifiers are applied *before* calculating other effects (such as those from the following spells).

Detect magic (*PH,* page 65): This works for at least a turn after the doors open, to a 60′ range in a 10′-wide path.

Clairvoyance (*PH,* page 73): This allows the dragon to examine any area with which it is familiar; it can watch any part of the hall. The area is not dark, lit at least in part by the weapons in the treasure pile, so normal vision is obtained.

***Shield** (*PH,* page 68): This will absorb all *magic missile* spells cast at the beast, and gives it a +1 bonus to all saving throws against frontal magical attacks.

***Fire shield** (Type A, *PH,* page 77): Anyone striking the dragon suffers double the damage inflicted. The monster gains a +2 bonus on saving throws vs. cold attacks, and takes half or no damage; it takes double normal damage if failing a saving throw against a fire-based attack.

Spells remaining: *Web* (C 2s, R 55′, DR 22 turns), *wizard lock* (C 2s, permanent), *fly* (C 3s, DR 12-17 turns), and possibly *polymorph other* (C 4s, R 55′). If fighters move towards it, the dragon might *web* them instead of breathing immediately. Each *webbed* victim has a -4 penalty on saving throws against the breath. The dragon will try to close the doors, if it can split the party, and might *wizard lock* them. As there is not enough room to use its wings, the dragon may need its *fly* spell for maneuverability. The *polymorph other,* if used, should be directed at a thief if possible, otherwise a fighter.

Reinforcement: If losing a battle, the dragon will bellow for its mate, which is around the corner. It will try to back up in the corridor, allowing the female to get a breath attack from the side in conjunction with its own.

The brown mold in the hall, if struck by the dragon breath, will grow eightfold in size. Only that portion of it actually struck by the breath will grow, but it does so instantly; calculate the new floor-space covered (8 times the original area), and inform the players immediately. If, due to mold growth, a victim comes within 5′ of it, use half damage (2d8), and allow movement away from it. Any victim within 5′ of the mold at the beginning of a round takes normal damage.

Brown mold: AC 9; M 0; D 4d8 in 5′ range; *ice storm* or *wall of ice* causes dormancy for 5d6 turns; only *cone of cold* or white dragon breath kills it; grows 2x size from torch, 4x from oil, 8x from breath or magical fire.

The large tunnel leads west 200′, turns northwest, and goes another 200′ to sunlight, a 30′-square cave entrance in that side of the mountain.

(If a *find the path* is in use, it leads through this area to the secret door leading down to area #16.)

12a.

The east wall of the area around the corner is covered by a *permanent illusion* of two more large red dragons, watching warily for intruders; the area appears to be 50′ wider (eastward) than it actually is. A pile of illusory treasure lies south of them, adjacent to a real pile of treasure in the southeast corner of the room. A female red dragon is in the southwest corner, before the secret door. She cannot speak nor use spells.

Female red dragon: AC -1, M 9/24, HD 11, AT 3, D d8/d8/3d10, STs10/STw9; THAC0 10, hp 44

Treasure: 5,000 cp, 20,000 sp, 10,000 ep, 20,000 gp, 2,000 pp, 50 gems (30,000 gp total), 50 jewelry (1,000 gp each), 1 scroll (in a case) with the command words for the *rod, staff,* and *wands* in the hall, and a spell book with the male dragon's 9 spells in it — the eight mentioned, plus *ice storm.*

13. Heater

This area contains burning coal and wood, kept there by the dragons for comfort. A small vent hole in the ceiling, 2′ across, leads up and winds around, eventually out to open air. The fire pit inflicts 30 points (7 dice) of fire damage per round to any within it. Comfortably within the flames are four fire snakes and their meager treasure of four gems, each worth 1,000 gp. They are all effectively invisible within the fire.

Fire snakes: 4, AC 6, M 4, HD 2, AT 1, D d4+paralysis, STs17/STw16; THAC0 16; hp 10 each

14. Study

As the party enters the oddly shaped 3-way intersection near the alcoves (#15), the magic-user illusion will reappear. A light appears 130′ east of that intersection, at the end of a straight corridor; it's the magic-user, carrying a lantern. He apparently sees the party's lights, pulls out a wand or stick, and starts gesturing. The party has

a few segments to react, but the opponent obviously has the initiative. The lightning bolt is 40′ long this time, 10′ wide, and ends at the west edge of the intersection (6d6 this time, as the wand). Characters can easily back up or jump north to get out of the way. Note that there is another *hasted* troll in the first alcove, ready to ambush the first victim heading that way.

The door to room #14 is *wizard locked* at 25th level of magic use. The room appears to be a study-laboratory, 20′ wide and 50′ long; it is actually 30′ long, with, on the north wall, a *permanent illusion* of a magic-user hiding behind a large stuffed chair in the northeast corner. A lab bench along the west wall has several bubbling beakers and two large chests are by the north wall. Stairs lead down from the upper section (25′ long) to the lower (northern) area; only one step is real, and two are illusory. The southern portion has two chairs, a clothes cabinet containing two robes and one peaked cap, and a bag containing two ounces of silver dust. (Note that the chairs and cabinet are immobile, fastened to the wall.) A plain carpet fills the center of the floor, leading down the steps and ending about 40′ away.

If the north wall (illusion) is touched, a north-south crack opens down the center of the room. (The illusion remains.) The clothes cabinet and chairs (fastened to the walls) do not move, but the rug falls, as do any within the room, into a water trap 60′ deep. The water is murky and warm, and a magical light source is needed to gain any vision (including infra-). The rug floats for 3 rounds, preventing those remaining above from seeing into the pool; at the bottom, four fresh-water scrags (water trolls) await. Note that they regenerate 3 hp/round, as do normal trolls, in water.

Scrags: 4, AC 3, M 3//15, HD 5+5, AT 3, D d4+1/d4+1/d10+2, STs14/STw13; THAC0 13; hp 35 each

Scattered about the bottom of the water trap are 1,000 cp, 2,000 sp, 3 gems (1,000 gp each), a *ring of protection +2*, and a fake *crystal ball*. It detects as magical, due to an electrical *glyph of warding* on it; if touched, it detonates for 36 points of damage in a 10′ radius (due to the water). Unless the water is removed, the victims also have a -4 penalty to saving throws. The ball is of high quality and enchantable, worth 5,000 gp to a magic-user.

15. Alcoves

Each of these three 10′ × 10′ niches appears to contain a troll. Normal chances for surprise apply to the first only, as a party is assumed to be more cautious thereafter. The alcoves contain the following creatures, in order of appearance (south to north); none has any treasure. Once melee begins with the first, the others will also attack.

a. troll, *hasted*: AC 4, M 12, HD 6+6, AT 3 (6), D d4+4/d4+4/2d6, STs13/STw12; THAC0 13 (9); hp 40

Notes: *Haste* at 25th-level magic use, gives 6 attacks/round, THAC0 9, regeneration 6hp/round.

b. "troll" huecuva: AC 3, M 9, HD 2, AT 3, D d3/d3/d4, STs17/STw16; THAC0 16; hp 10

Notes: Disease per touch, prevents magical curing until removed. Turned as wight; troll form gives 3 attacks but not full troll damage. Polymorph is natural ability, not magical, not dispellable.

c. "troll" fire giant: AC 3, M 12, HD 11+3, AT 3, D d6+4/d6+4/2d8, STs10/STw9; THAC0 10; hp 80

Notes: Magical, has drunk a *potion of polymorphing*; immune to all fire; changes back to normal form when slain. Greater damage is due to greater strength than a normal troll.

The secret door north of them, on the east wall, is covered by a *hallucinatory terrain* of normal wall with a *symbol of hopelessness* (as the spell) on it. The *symbol* has no actual effect, and the illusion disappears if touched.

16. Tunnel

The corridor slopes down, noticeable by anyone, and turns a corner northward. At that spot, a pool of fairly clear water begins; it is 50′ long and only 9″ deep at the lowest part (30′ north of the turn). A large stalagtite (looking suspiciously like a roper) hangs at that low point, along the east edge of the ceiling; a drop of water falls from it each round. It is indeed the remains of a roper, now petrified; an evil aura remains, but the thing is harmless. Two crystal oozes lurk in the pool, 75% invisible. They will attack if their pool is invaded. Note that they are immune to acid, cold, and fire, and any blow inflicts but 1 point of damage.

Crystal ooze: 2, AC 8, M 1//3, HD 4, AT 1, D 4d4+paralysis, STs16/STw15; THAC0 15; hp 25 each

This corridor slopes upwards from the center of the pool, ending in a normal but locked door. A secret door in the ceiling near the pool leads to a short vertical tunnel and another secret door, opening into the large dragon tunnel (#12).

17. Center corridor

This area is filled with poison gas, which billows out if either door is opened, filling an additional 60′ length of corridor. Each victim within the cloud makes a saving throw vs. breath weapon or dies; anyone opening a door has a -4 penalty to the roll. Any surprised victim has a -4 penalty to the roll (cumulative for the door opener).

17a. End corridor

Two, identical: The mirror wall here is detectable by anyone, as scratches on the floor indicate that it swivels towards the normal door. A small narrow object (e.g. dagger) can be inserted into the vertical crack by the south wall, to open it; if so, poisonous gas (as in #17) immediately billows out to fill an additional 90′ of corridor, requiring a saving throw vs. poison for each victim within the cloud.

18. Stairs down

The door is locked and has a poison needle trap; unless removed, anyone opening the door is hit and must make a saving throw vs. poison or be paralyzed for 2-12 hours (removable by *neutralize poison* or a higher spell). The south wall of this 10′ cubic room is covered by an *illusion*; after 10′ of corridor, stairs lead sharply downwards, and are misty and webbed (as per the magic-user's *guards and wards* spell).

If the illusion is touched, the entire ceiling falls, a massive block of stone. Anyone under it takes damage equal to half of his or her original hit points, and must make a saving throw vs. wands or be utterly crushed (to -50 hit points). A surprised victim has a -8 penalty to the saving throw, but note that if the trap is detected (by thief ability or magically), surprise is impossible.

Saving throws must be made for any items crushed; if the victim's saving throw was failed, a -8 penalty applies (vs. crushing blow). The illusion disappears if touched.

19. Tomb

These two rooms are identical; the first entered is false, and the second contains Bigby. The 90′-square room is 25′ tall and is illuminated by flashing lights coming from two-20′ square objects, 20′ tall in the northwest and northeast corners. Anyone seeing the lights must make a saving throw vs. spells, or stand still, stunned. *Dispel magic* allows a victim to make another saving throw, but no other spells (save *limited wish* or *wish*) have any effect. Any magical *darkness* in the room is instantly *dispelled* by the flashing lights.

The primary features of the room are the cubes in the corners, the center, the statues, and the doors, as described below:

a. The Cubes

These flashing cubes are the "brain" of the entire artifact and have means of defending themselves; each is capable of firing all the rays of a beholder, to a maximum of 1 *each* per round. The cubes cannot be damaged by a weapon of less than +4 enchantment, and any blow inflicts only 1 point of damage; each has 100 hp. The cubes are also immune to all spells of 6th level or less. The range of the rays is sufficient to hit anything in the room, but no further.

Cause serious wounds (2d8+1)
Charm person

Charm monster
Death ray
Disintegrate
Fear
Flesh to stone (reversible)
Sleep (40′ square)
Slow (20′ square)
Telekinesis (250 lb)

If communicated with (via *telepathy* or other non-verbal means), the cubes will warn intruders not to attack them; they are not innately hostile, merely defensive (and of lawful neutral alignment).

b. Center

In the center of the room, two square step-patterns lead up to a central block 5′ tall and 10′ square. Atop this block is a 10′ glass cube, apparently empty. A statue of an 8′-tall burly humanoid giant stands on the lower step, one on each corner (4 in all).

Magical sight can reveal the contents of the cube. A 2′-high bier in the center supports an elderly supine human male, eyes closed, wearing a robe, bracers, and a ring on each hand. He has a wand at his side and holds a rod on his chest with both hands. Above him, supported horizontally 3′ below the top of the box, is a mirror. Glass rods are mounted at odd angles from wall to wall inside the box, apparently so that very little free space remains.

DM note: This is to minimize the chances of an intruder entering by *teleport* or *dimension door*.

The glass is magical, treated with a *glassteel* spell; it cannot be easily broken. If damaged at all, the figure inside (Bigby) will awake. He will also stir if the statues are destroyed (see below) and then his name is spoken aloud within the room. However, in the first (fake) room, the contents are illusory, and nothing will cause him to stir. (See "Bigby," for notes on the results of success.)

c. Statues

In the first (fake) room, the statues are male caryatid columns, which will animate when the box, any step, or any statue is touched.

Columns: 4, AC 5, M 6, HD 5, AT 1, D 2d4; THAC0 15, hp 22 each; immune to spells, normal weapons = 1/2 damage, magical weapons = full damage but without magic/strength bonuses

In the second (real) room, the statues are stone golems, which will activate when the box, any step, any statue, or the cubes are touched.

Golems: 4, AC 5, M 6, HD 14, AT 1, D 3d8; THAC0 8, hp 60 each; *slow* 1″ range, 1 per 2 rounds; +2 weapon to hit; *rock to mud, stone to flesh* makes vulnerable to normal weapons; immune to other spells

d. The doors

A normal door is in the middle of each wall; all are locked. The doors leading "nowhere" (by the map) lead to gray mist; anyone entering the mist is teleported, at random, somewhere within 1,000 miles in any direction. The destination may, however, be set by giving the proper instructions to the cubes.

Modifications: This encounter isn't very difficult for a high-level party. If you wish, have the cubes get involved by *disintegrating* weapons that can harm the golems, using *charm* and *fear* to remove invaders from the fray, and/or *cause serious wounds* on those engaged in battle. Try not to get too nasty; after all, they've made it this far. . . .

Bigby

If properly awakened, Bigby will telepathically tell the cubes to disintegrate the glass box, and will then activate his *rod of beguiling* within 20′ of the party; this is merely insurance. He wears *rings of regeneration* and *protection +5, bracers of defense AC 0*, and a *robe of eyes*. He carries a *wand of illumination* and a *cube of force*, and can call forth his minions in his *mirror of life trapping* as desired (including a cockatrice, beholder, hieracosphinx, ogre mage, storm giant, troll, and xorn, all of whom are *charmed*). He still remembers his spells, as well (Level 30 magic-user).

After using his *rod*, Bigby asks for *potions of longevity*. He can recognize them by smell, and cannot be deceived. He will drink up to three of them, making successful miscibility and reversal checks each time. If none are available, he will offer the same warnings as each would-be rescue party has been given (see **Players' Background**), and will say good-bye. The cubes then take over, running time in reverse, but unable to restore life to any slain characters. Note that this results in everyone appearing outside without treasure.

If all goes well, Bigby will converse warily, keeping his distance but not becoming hostile. He will have the cubes disintegrate all armor and weapons found in the dungeon, explaining that they are cursed (they disintegrate if struck by sunlight), but allowing the party to keep everything else found. He can provide command words for any items found, if asked. He will offer one favor to each rescuer, to be obtained at any later date by contacting him; he will also give the party one scroll of his "hand" spells (1 each of levels 5 through 9), as party treasure.

Finally, Bigby will offer to send the party home by *teleportation*. If accepted, he will set the destination desired via the cubes and allow the party to leave by a door. Otherwise, the party may leave on foot — by what is now a straight, featureless corridor, 20′ × 20′, leading 290′ south to the original entranceway.

20. Crossway

A shimmering magical curtain of light extends down the center of this area, north to south, ceiling-high. It is a permanent magical effect, overlaid with a *permanent illusion* of an identical visual effect (and can thus be detected as being an illusion). It offers no resistance to physical attempts to penetrate it. It negates all spell effects touching it, and all magic items become non-magical as they pass through (no saving throw, no chance of error). Magic items merely contacting it must be saved for (vs. disintegration) or become non-magical. Note that the curtain does not cause anything to disappear (except the magic, and thus the glow from formerly magical swords and daggers), and that it has no other effect. The curtain is not evil, but any intelligent magic weapon can sense a definite aura of extreme danger about it and will warn its user if possible.

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Appendix

It is assumed that Bigby's level (30th) is sufficient to place him in a position of high power, above all PCs. If not, adjust his level upwards to fit your campaign and add other powerful magic items to the given list.

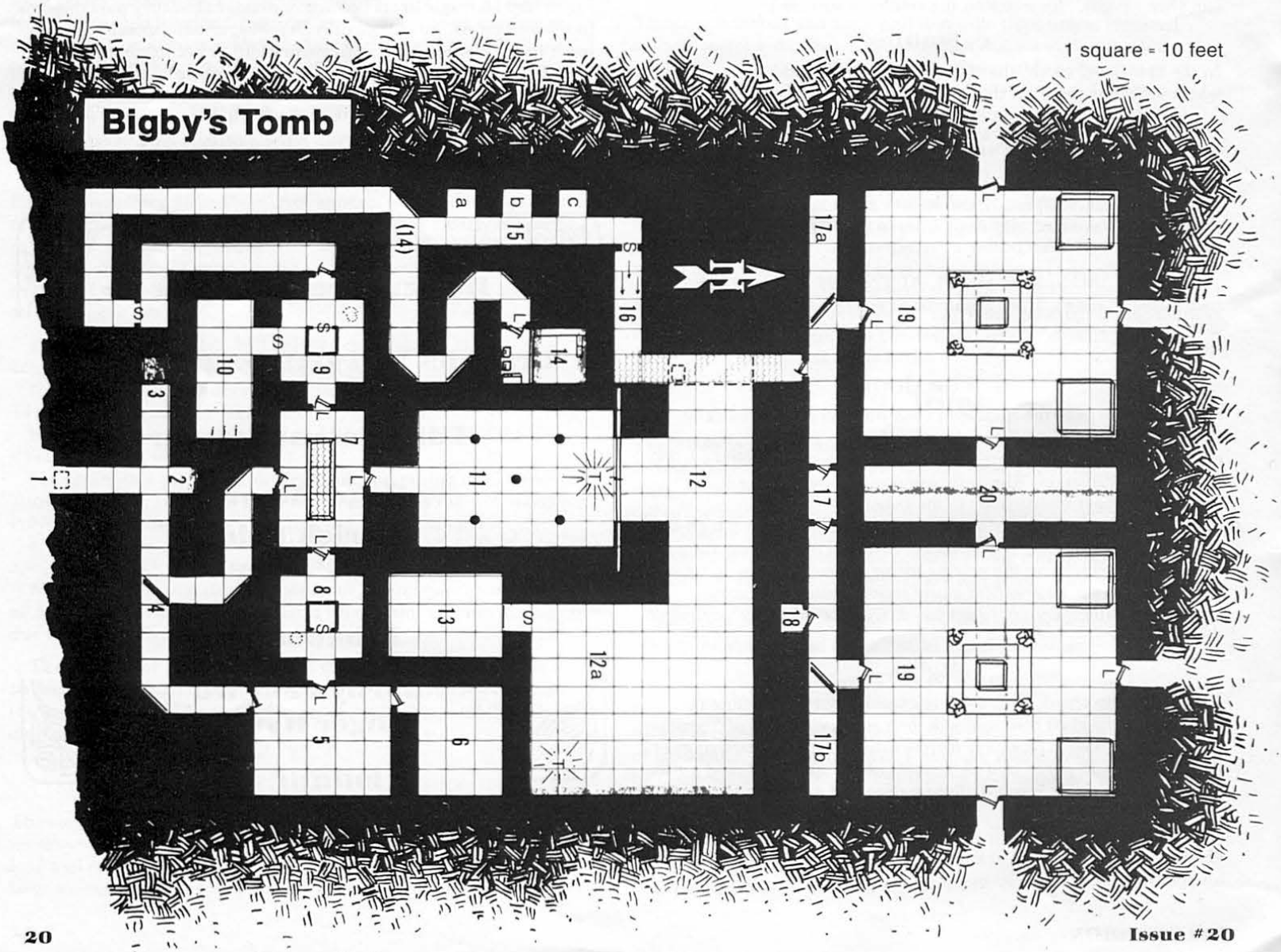
Bigby: neutral M-U 30; AC -9, hp 59

STR 11 INT 17 WIS 16 DEX 18 CON 15 CHA 10

SAVING THROWS: (base; +5 ring, +2 wisdom)
Poison/paralysis/death: 8
Petrif./polymorph: 5
Rod/staff/wand: 3
Breath: 7
Spell: 4

MAGIC ITEMS:
* *Bracers of Defense,* AC 0
* *Rings of protection* +3 and +5
* *Ring of regeneration*
* *Ring of x-ray vision*
* *Robe of eyes* (infra/ultravision 12″, *detect invisible* 24″ range, see all things, track as ranger)
* *Djinni bottle*
* *Dagger +2*
* *Rod of beguiling* (20′ radius, 27 charges, 1 turn/charge)
* *Staff of power* (+2; 14 charges; 1 charge= *continual light,* darkness 5′, *levitation, lightning bolt, ray of enfeeblement, fireball;* 2 charges= *shield 5′ radius, globe of invulnerability, paralyzation* in 4″x 2″ cone)
* Wand of illumination (55 charges; 1 charge=*dancing lights, light;* 2 charges=*continual light*; 3 charges=*sunburst,* 6d6 vs undead)
* *Wand of lightning* (41 charges; 1 charge=*shock touch* 1d10; 2 charges=*bolt*)
* *Cube of force* (36 charges/day, 1″ cube; 1 charge vs. gases, 1″ move; 2 charges vs. non-living, 8″ move; 3 charges vs. living, 6″ move; 4 charges vs. magic, 4″ move; 6 charges vs. everything, 3″ move)
* *Mirror of life trapping;* 15 spaces, 7 occupied (all *charmed*):
  Cockatrice (N; AC 6, M 6/18, HD 5, hp 31, AT 1, D d3, THACO 15)
  Beholder (LE; AC 0/2/7, M 3, HD 12, hp 54, AT 1, D 2d4, THAC0 9)
  Hieracosphinx (CE; AC 1, M 9/36, HD 9, hp 50, AT 3, D 2d4/2d4/d10, THAC0 12)
  Ogre mage (LE; AC 4, M 9/15, HD 5+2, hp 30, AT 1, D d12, THAC0 15; *fly, invisibility, darkness 1″, polymorph self, regenerate* 1/r; 1/day: *charm person, gaseous form, sleep, cone of cold* 8d8)
  Storm giant (CG; AC 1, M 15, HD 15+4, hp 98, AT 1, D 7d6, THAC0 8; *predict weather, control weather, control winds, call lightning* (3, each 13d6))
  Troll (CE; AC 4, M 12, HD 6+6, hp 45, AT 3, D d4+4/d4+4/2d6, THAC0 13; *regenerate* 3/r)
  Xorn (N, AC -2, M 9, HD 7+7, hp 47, AT 4, D d3/d3/d3/2d10+4, THAC0 12; *immune to fire, cold; electricity*=1/2 or no damage; *form shift*=AC 8)

Bigby's spellbooks are stored within the cubes, irrecoverable except by him.



ENCOUNTERS

The GAMMA WORLD® Aquabot

by James M. Ward and Roger Raupp

The scene

The creature came out of the ocean's depths in a bubbling froth, outlined by the setting sun. Its sensor units flashed brightly as its gun ports searched for targets on the land masses before it. Guided by three pure strain humans who were almost as perfect as the metal marvel they controlled, the aquabot switched into land-walking mode and approached the "indestructable" city that was home to the Radioactivists.

Mutants within the walls sensed the approach of the killing machine long before it came into effective firing range; they rushed out to meet the creature before it reached the town. Thousands of mutants, many with powerful weapons of the ancients, launched attacks of their own on the new menace from the sea. The defenses of their support fighter and those of the main unit proved sufficient to ward off most of the initial damage.

Then it was the aquabot's turn. Fourteen missiles launched themselves at the city. Fourteen lesser rockets fired at the mutants that clustered like ants at the bot's feet. Six heavy beam cannons began melting the crystal walls of the outer city, forming glassy lumps. Eight pencil-thin beams stabbed out at unusual targets and punched fist-sized holes in every target they reached.

For twenty minutes the aquabot walked towards the city and slugged it out with the town's mutated inhabitants. Finally, as the bot reached the center of the city, it was stopped by the combined power of over 10,000 mutants, destructive weapons of the ancients, new ones of modern times, and one fully functional warbot which was eventually totally destroyed.

The aquabot was left a smokey ruin in the center of a slagged city. The surviving inhabitants stared in shock at their ravaged homes and felt awe at the thought that one machine could do such damage. As they tried to pull themselves up from the despair of their losses, one mutant with unusually heightened vision turned and in the distance saw seven more of the watery horrors rise from the sea and move towards their city.

TYPE: Aquabot
NUMBER: 1
HIT POINTS: Physical body (400)
CONTROL: E
STATUS: 4 ranks
ARMOR: 1
SENSORS: A/B/C
POWER: Twin nuclear plants with special nuclear plant in support fighter
SPEED: Pods = 240/10200/180, WATER = 160/6800/120;
Support Fighter: Pods = 240/10200/180

DESCRIPTION: The aquabot was designed to attack and destroy military installations on the coasts or underwater. Twelve aquabots were originally produced, and one industrial complex (location undisclosed) was designed to mass produce them.

It is a three-man unit with two operators in the forward control room and one aft in the support fighter.

Unit systems

14 missile/torpedo tubes
Range: 10 kilometers (water)/200 (air)
Damage: 500 (hit points), 300-meter radius
Supply: unit normally has 100 torpedos and 100 missiles in its carriers

14 rocket launchers
Range: 100 kilometers (water)/1,000 (air)
Damage: 100 (hit points), 150-meter radius
Supply: Unit normally carries 300 rocket launchers

6 heavy beam cannons
Range: 2 kilometers (water)/10 (air)
Damage: 555 (structural hit points of damage); 100 (when used against soft targets)

8 light beam weapons
Range: 1 kilometer (water and air)
Damage: 100 (structural hit points of damage); 50 (when used against soft targets)

Defense shield projectors
Two shields each absorb a total of 500 damage points, the shields renew themselves to new status every 20 minutes.

Defense bubble systems
These units allow the aquabot to move through water absolutely undetected by all known sensor equipment.

Detachable control head pod
In the event that the unit suffers extreme damage, this pod can detach itself and move away from the field of battle. The pod may detach only when all other systems have been destroyed. The pod may automatically detach if control personnel are incapacitated for any reason.

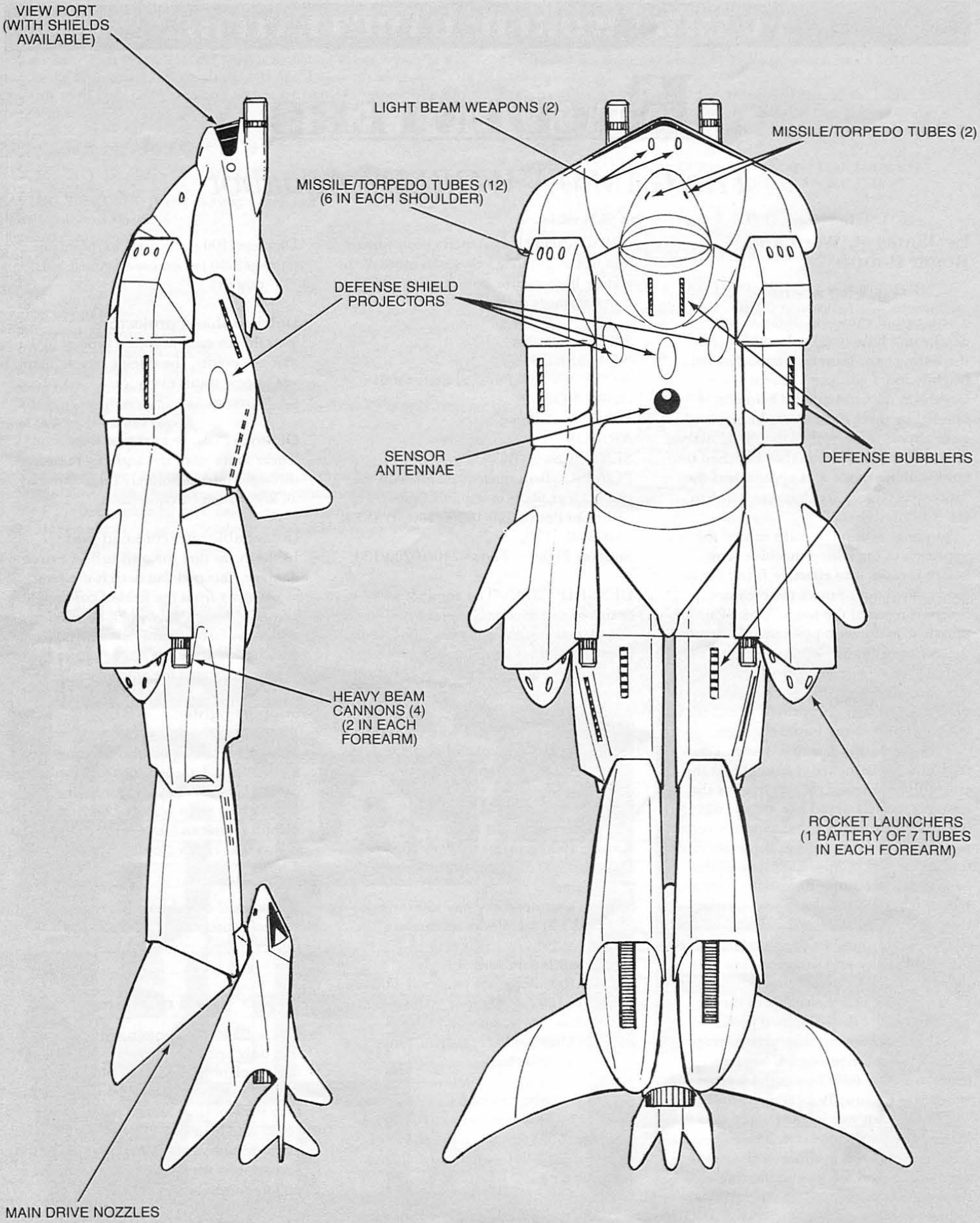
Support fighter
This unit is capable of independent movement when the aquabot is fighting on land. When detached, the support fighter carries 8 light beam weapons. The support fighter has a personal body shield of 100 hit points and an energy shield of 50 points that renews itself every 40 minutes.

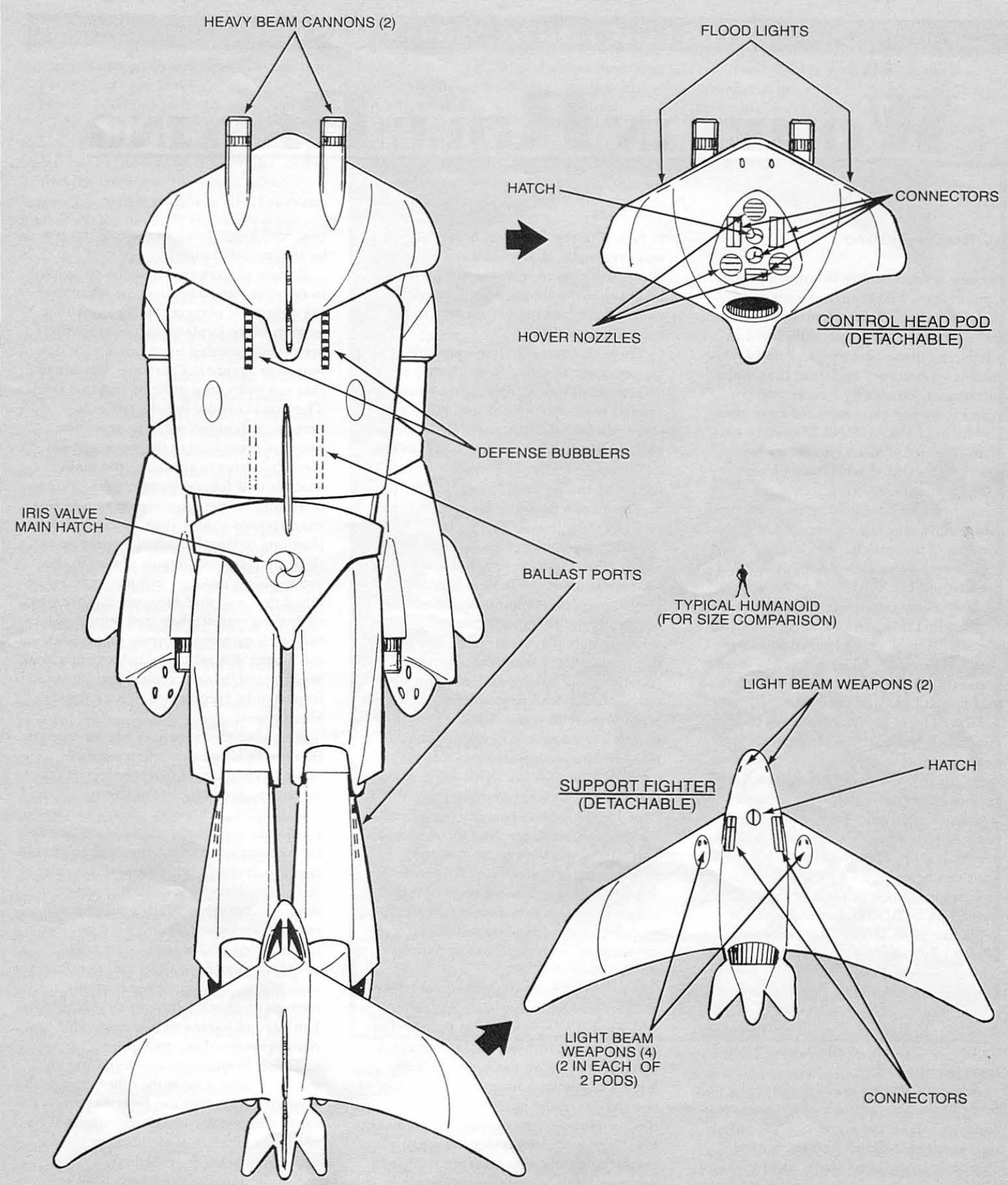
Crew
There are 2 crew members in forward control center, and 1 in the support fighter.

End of report

The aquabot fleet commander observed that only one aquabot was destroyed in the attack on the city. He felt confident that in a short time his fleet would dominate the world. It looked like nothing could stop his victory.

He wouldn't have been so confident if he had seen what was trailing his fleet of aquabot units at that moment.


VIEW PORT
(WITH SHIELDS
AVAILABLE)
LIGHT BEAM WEAPONS (2)
MISSILE/TORPEDO TUBES (2)
MISSILE/TORPEDO TUBES (12)
(6 IN EACH SHOULDER)
DEFENSE SHIELD
PROJECTORS
SENSOR
ANTENNAE
DEFENSE BUBBLERS
HEAVY BEAM
CANNONS (4)
(2 IN EACH
FOREARM)
ROCKET LAUNCHERS
(1 BATTERY OF 7 TUBES
IN EACH FOREARM)
MAIN DRIVE NOZZLES


HEAVY BEAM CANNONS (2)
FLOOD LIGHTS
HATCH
CONNECTORS
HOVER NOZZLES
CONTROL HEAD POD
(DETACHABLE)
DEFENSE BUBBLERS
IRIS VALVE
MAIN HATCH
BALLAST PORTS
TYPICAL HUMANOID
(FOR SIZE COMPARISON)
LIGHT BEAM WEAPONS (2)
HATCH
SUPPORT FIGHTER
(DETACHABLE)
LIGHT BEAM
WEAPONS (4)
(2 IN EACH OF
2 PODS)
CONNECTORS

WOMEN IN ROLE PLAYING

by Roger Moore

Fantasy reflects reality in some measure. Even in the 20th century, we are more likely to see males than females in active and adventurous occupations. Even in relatively quiet pastimes like role-playing gaming, it becomes apparent that males outnumber females by a large margin. Women, as one can easily see from reading the mail DRAGON® Magazine gets, often (but not always) encounter problems when gaming with male players in AD&D® games. Getting past some of these problems and getting things settled into a more enjoyable atmosphere is the concern of this article.

One cannot set down a set of rules of conduct in playing D&D® or AD&D games (or any other role-playing game for that matter) that are guaranteed to make one a winner or make everything completely enjoyable. However, a few themes keep cropping up that are more likely to lead to good gaming than bad.

First, female players can work to maximize the advantages of their characters and minimize or eliminate the disadvantages. In many RPGs, female characters are not going to be as strong as male characters, and may have other disadvantages or limitations set upon them. It is generally true, though, that such limitations can be overcome by magical devices or weapons. Look at most of the male characters in AD&D games who own items like *guantlets of ogre power* or *girdles of giant strength*. Do they all have strengths greater than 18/50, the female human limit? Probably not; however, the magical items completely offset their own limitations. *Potions of giant strength*, though temporary in effect, also extend these limits.

As far as gaming goes, perhaps the only other limitations women might encounter concern height and weight. This may only come into play when the female character in question finds, as one ardent giant-killing cleric in a campaign of mine did, that *hammers of thunderbolts* cannot be used well except by characters over 6′ tall. The cleric mentioned above refused to part with the *hammer*, however, and was eventually able to find a *wish ring* which she used to increase her physical height to just a bit over the 6′ mark. Giants have become very scarce in my campaign now.

These character limitations, then, can be overcome in time. In truth they often do not mean much. Few fighters run around with exceptional strengths, and there will be little difference between male and female warriors in any aspect of combat. However, the non-combat aspects of the game can be even more important and more of a problem for female characters and their female players.

Male players are often more than willing to go out of their way to have their characters assist the female characters of female players. All questions about the desirability of this mild form of chivalry aside, female players seem to find that this is not such a bad deal unless they come to grow too dependent upon such aid. This can lead to problems when male players come to resent having to help what's-her-name out of a jam again, or go off with Sorceress Such-and-such on another of her quests. Both sides, male and female, should remember that interdependence among characters is what makes them stronger than the monsters they face; but taken to an extreme, dependence is destructive. All characters should be able to handle most of the minor problems they face on their own without having to call another character over to deal with rude tavern patrons or sneaky shop clerks.

A second problem growing out of the above situation is that male characters who are called upon to help female characters (as well as those male characters who just decide on their own to help female characters) may want some sort of reward out of the deal. How this is handled is left up to the players, but if a certain degree of independence is desired, then it might be wise to make it clear in one way or another that such rewards, if given at all, will be kept to a minimum. What do male characters who help other male characters out of a jam get for rewards? Why should female characters be treated differently?

Female players may also find it helpful to develop some assertiveness when gaming with male players. Suggestions that women make in planning an adventure are often discarded by the males for one reason or another. There are two things that can overcome resistance of this kind. The first is for the female gamer to become as familiar with the rules and situations involved in the game as possible. This helps to eliminate the male attitude that female gamers "don't know anything." If the guys are setting up their characters to charge into a vampire's lair, planning to simply hack the vampire to death, but the one female player in the group points out that vampires cannot be killed that way and suggests another way of dealing with it, then that female player may pick up some brownie points with the others. Knowing the rules goes a long way toward being accepted and, more importantly, being listened to in gaming situations.

Knowing the rules may not be enough, though. Male gamers often relegate female gamers (and their characters) to secondary positions in the game.

"Here," says Chuck, "Mary's character should stay in the corridor and watch for monsters. All of us guys will go charge into the dragon's lair and beat the crud out of the dragon. If anything comes down the corridor, Mary's paladin will come in and warn us and we'll go beat the crud out of that, too."

"Why should I wait in the corridor?" says Mary. "My character is tough enough to smack a dragon on the nose. I'm tired of having to play watchdog and not get involved in any fighting."

"Well, okay," says Chuck (rolling his eyes and shrugging at the other guys in the group). "Sure. You can be our second rank, and you can attack the dragon if one of us gets killed or something, or maybe you can attack it from behind. . . ."

"Look, guys," says Mary. "We're supposed to be a team. I feel like my character's being left out of the main action, and I really want my paladin to

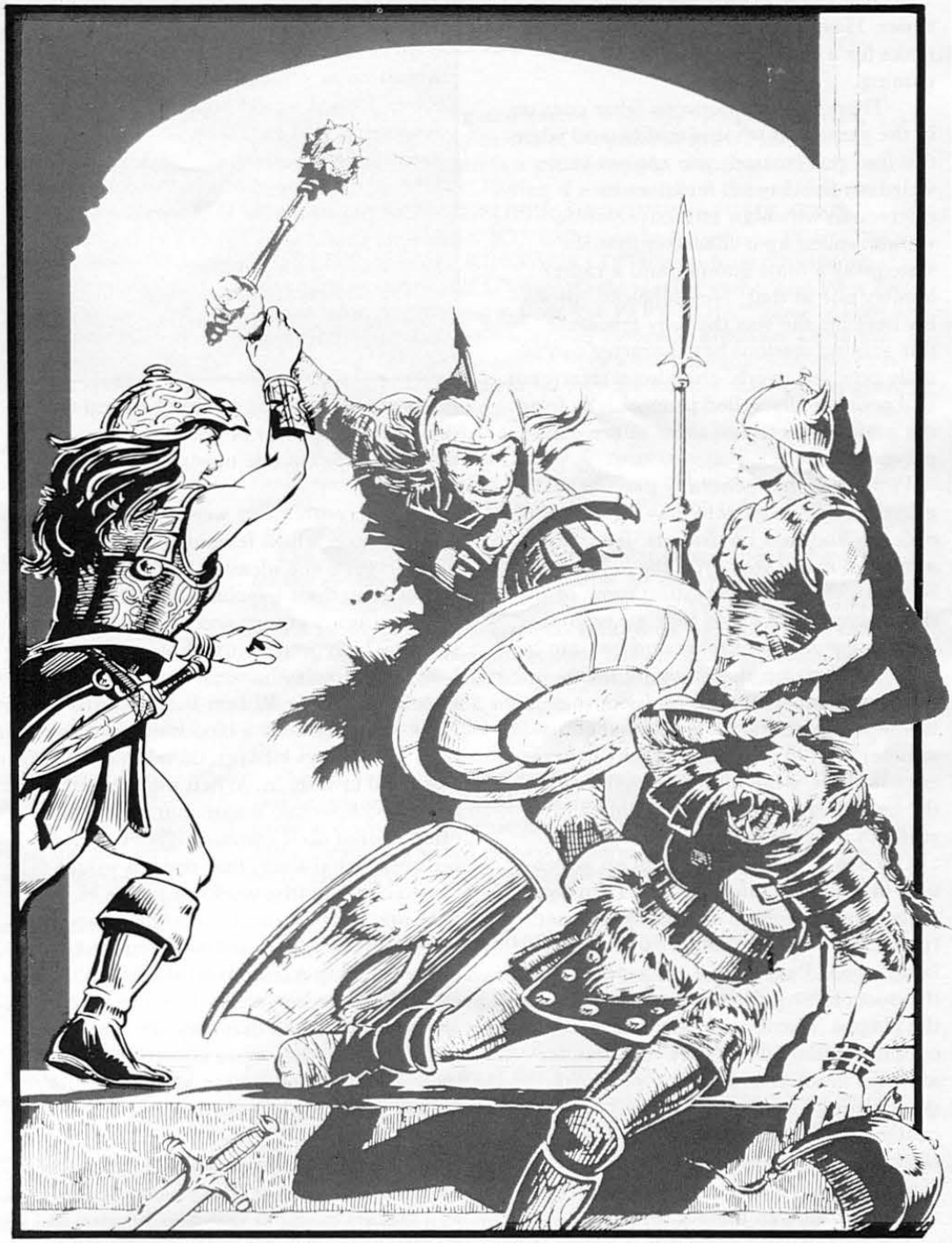
get involved in this. Watching the doorway isn't enough. Why don't all of our characters just go in and beat the crud out of the dragon together?"

Hopefully at this point the guys will see the light and try to make amends. No one likes to be patronized, and no one likes to be left out of the action. This means being denied the chance to become a hero (or heroine), which is no fun at all. However, if after all this the guys *still* don't want to let female characters get any of the glory, then the group may have to be dropped as hopeless. A sad possibility but a real one.

Something else female gamers might want to consider is stereotyping. One of the deadliest things for a character to have happen to him or her is to become pigeonholed, easily characterized so that everyone expects only a certain thing from that character and nothing else. In my experience, the most damaging pigeonhole that female characters can get sorted into is that of "cute magic-user" and its equally infamous cousin, "cute thief" (both of the above also come in human and elven variations). Magic-users and thieves are certainly important in the game, but these two classes are not expected to do much face-to-face combat and are often not taken seriously by those playing fighter characters. Taking the role of an "out-of-combat" character may further cause a female player to be dropped into a second-class status in the game, unless the character is carefully handled. Being played as "cute" will often be perceived as being empty-headed as well.

Players should at all costs avoid having their characters be so easily stereotyped. What about a female thief who leads the rest of the party, scouting dangerous territory, who also wears an assortment of throwing daggers and unusual combat or adventuring devices? What about a female eleven magic-user (who in some people's eyes already has three strikes against her) who is a well-traveled, cynical, chaotic, and who enjoys timing her spells to create the maximum possible effect on those around her, building a reputation as a very unpredictable but much respected and feared mage? The role-playing of the character will, in the last analysis, make all the difference.

Mages and thieves aside, what about other professions? Why aren't there more female ranger characters? Female paladins? Female monks? Female assassins? None of these roles are what you might call "traditionally" female (if anything in an AD&D game can be called traditional), and the very presence of a female character in such roles might gather considerable respect for that character. While we're on the topic, why not try a female gnome, halfling, or dwarf (with or without a beard)? There have been some female halfling thieves in campaigns I ran and gamed in who would cause your toes to curl upon meeting them. Female half-orcs, for those who don't mind the loss in charisma and like the gain in other areas, might also prove fun to run as characters. Humans and elves need not be the only races played in the AD&D game; male characters (and players) may sometimes find them to be more attractive, but again, being cute isn't everything.



An article that addresses the question of how to enhance the enjoyment women have in role-playing is of little value unless it has something for the male readers to consider as well. Oftentimes it seems that guys like to go out of their way to try and have their characters overwhelm the female characters with their great strength, charm, sophistication, brilliance at springing traps and outsmarting monsters, and so forth. This is fun, and is nothing to complain about (stuff like this can make for interesting adventures), but once in a while you get the idea that some guys think the gaming session is just another substitute for a singles' bar.

Women often like playing male characters in role-playing games, though men don't often play female ones. This some-

times takes a little while to get used to, but everything works out fine. Indeed, from a male point of view, this may eliminate some of the problems that could arise from trying to role-play male characters who are running around with a female character among them. If everyone's "just one of the boys," things flow a lot easier. Having a character that fits in can make for a more enjoyable session of gaming.

There is a line between what goes on in the game and what is reality, and when this line gets crossed, you can get some weird results. I recall an adventure I refereed in which an attractive young woman rolled up a character that she stated was a male gnome, and a rather homely one at that. Nevertheless, (probably because she was the only female at this gaming session) her character continually received overly-chivalrous treatment and occasionally veiled propositions from the *male* characters of some of the male players.

Women do not generally play AD&D games or any other role-playing games in order to find new boyfriends. It might be a relief to many women if the "singles' bar" atmosphere permeating some of their adventures would fade away, so that everyone would just relax and get into playing the game and enjoying themselves. Again, this is not to discourage having one's character go off and court another one; this can be a wacky experience in itself. Male players might keep the boundaries between the game and reality a little more in mind, though.

Once in a while you hear of an adventure in which a male character (run by a male gamer) molests a female character (played by a female gamer) against the latter's will. People who are prone to pull this sort of thing should be avoided like the plague. The female player might consider talking it out with the offender after the game is over (if she's calmed down enough by then), but the best course of action might be to have the offending player dumped from the group. If this cannot be done, then maybe another group can be found.

The best defense against this before it even happens would be to be choosy about one's gaming partners. One can also bring the topic up discreetly or use some other method to sound out the maturity level of the other players. As a last resort, it often works to simply say, "Look, if you do what you're about to do, I'm going to be mad. This is a game, but you're going to far." Direct confrontation may stop the problem; if not, then the best solutions are to either get rid of the offending player or leave to find a better group. No one needs problems of that sort.

Until recently there were very few sources upon which female players could draw to get some ideas on different ways to role-play their female character is fantasy settings. Fantasy and science-fiction stories which predominantly feature male heroes or female characters written by male writers, like Robert E. Howard's Dark Agnes (who is a bloodthirsty sociopath who savors killing), do not have a lot of appeal to women. When men write stories with female major characters, they often cannot do it convincingly or they do not create characters that women would like to emulate (the works of James H. Schmitz, who wrote the Telzey Amberdon novels, are widely noted as exceptions and are highly recommended). More often than not, female fantasy characters are notable only in that they are the girlfriends of some more powerful and important male character. Were it not for Conan, who would remember Belit or Valeria?

Fortunately, there are still a large number of female writers who produce excellent fantasy material that may be used to find role-models for playing female characters in fantasy games. Lynn Abbey's Rifkind, C.J. Cherryh's Morgaine, C.L. Moore's Jirel of Joiry, and Jo Clayton's Aleytys stand out among the best presented and developed adventuresses in fantasy literature. Doris Piserchia, Tanith Lee, Phyllis Ann Karr, Margaret St. Clair, and Jessica Amanda Salmonson have also produced some outstanding fiction in this line, and Ms. Salmonson has also edited two excellent collections of short stories about fantasy heroines (*Amazons!* and *Amazons II*, both in paperback by DAW Books) that any gamer, female or not, should find worth reading.

Role-playing gamers are also urged to read the DRAGONLANCE™ novels by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman, to be released starting this fall. These books have a number of female characters who are realistic and fascinating, and surely rank as some of the most memorable personalities that fantasy literature can offer. The first book, *The Dragons of Autumn Twilight*, will be released in November of this year. TSR, Inc., has already released three modules (as of August 1984) in the DRAGONLANCE series, which feature female characters who play a major role in the development of the campaign. DL3 *The Dragons of Hope*, is worth studying in particular.

It is a rather sad note that in *The Rogues Gallery* (a TSR AD&D® game aid describing pregenerated non-player characters) only one of the 18 personalities taken from actual AD&D game campaigns is a female character previously played by a female player: Jean Well's unpredictable Ceatitle Trodar Northman. "Cea" is a well-presented character with a unique personality; she is worth taking the time to examine as an alternative to playing a cute magic-user.

Comments from readers on this article would be greatly appreciated. AD&D games, like all the other role-playing games available now, are meant to be fun for all players; and, getting messed over because you and your character happens to be female is not going to be much fun at all.

Dear Roger,

In the previous article, you mention female characters who are molested by male characters in the course of a game. What does such behavior say of the DM who allows this to happen? I assume that if this situation were to develop, the DM would know something about it beforehand. If so, I would hope that any self-respecting DM would try to discourage the male player from such a deed. If the DM is unable to dissuade the player, I would hope that the DM would give the female character a fighting chance to get herself out of the situation.

You also mentioned possible sources for role-models for female characters. I often emulate the heroines in some of Georgette Heyer's books when role-playing female characters. Georgette Heyer has a wonderful way of portraying all her characters so that the reader can really get a feel for why her characters act as they do; even if the novels are romantic in nature, the characters are portrayed in such a way that role-playing gamers could put these characters in other settings and still retain their basic traits of bravery, trustworthiness, decisiveness, intelligence, and even lightheartedness.

The key is action. Active and involved characters develop personalities much more easily than those who just remain in the background and do nothing.

Georgia S. Moore

NOW THAT IT'S OVER . . .

Looking back at the GEN CON® 17 Game Convention

by Roger ("My feet hurt!") Moore

Summing up a convention like the GEN CON® 17 game convention is difficult for anyone, but it's worth the time to take a stab at it. Of all the game conventions that TSR, Inc., has organized so far, this was certainly the largest of them all, and probably the best. At present, it is estimated that over 8,000 gamers attended, literally flooding the entire University of Wisconsin Parkside campus from one end to the other.

Rather than try to arrange my impressions of the convention in a coherent fashion, I'll just focus on things at random (my brain isn't working straight even now, two days after the game fair ended).

The DRAGONLANCE™ drama

The very first events listed in the convention brochure were the two presentations of "DRAGONLANCE: Tales of Autumn," held on Friday and Saturday nights. Those who came to the campus theater were treated to such a superbly rendered dramatic presentation that the Saturday night crowd of over three hundred gave the cast a standing ovation.

The presentation was a reading from the upcoming DRAGONLANCE trilogy by TSR book editor Margaret Weis and game designer Tracy Hickman; the first book, *The Dragonlance Chronicles: Tales of Autumn Twilight*, will be released in November 1984. Margaret and Tracy arranged the reading and were supported by a cast of other talented folk: Laura Hickman, Doug Niles, Janet and Gary Pack, Terry Phillips, David Baldwin, and Harold Johnson. The song and poetry were written by Michael Williams. The little blonde elf who went through the halls and through the display stands in the gym yelling out the announcements for the play and handing out free tickets was Elizabeth Baldwin, who deserves an award for having the most spunk.

The event was very moving and evocative, and certainly stood out as one of the highlights of the entire convention. If another reading is held next year at GEN CON 18 Game Fair, you should be there.

Where were the DMs?

Sorry to say that there were some game referees that decided not to show up at the convention this year, and some gamers were left high and dry. The DMs who didn't come lost some cash because their preregistration fees weren't refundable. But the gamers who were rooked out of a game lost more.

Okay, okay, some DMs couldn't come because of family emergencies, or because of cash problems, or because of exploding cars. If this applies to you, please accept my apologies and ignore the rest of this paragraph. But one is left with a lingering suspicion that some DMs didn't come out of laziness, or lack of preparation for their events, or some other such excuse. Steps are being taken by TSR management to assure that next year's convention will be free of such problems. 'Nuff said.

Hot games

From where I was standing in the gymnasium, it was apparent that lots of new games had hit the market in the last few months. Maddened, slavering hordes of hard-core gamers could be seen clutching boxes and booklets of fresh game produce, casting their cash and caution to the winds. A truly inspiring sight.

The most interesting new games, from my viewpoint at least, were in the science-fiction end of the gaming field. Pacesetter's TIMEMASTER™ game is a good example, a strong contender for best new game of 1984. Giving it some excellent competition were TSR, Inc.'s MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ and THE ADVENTURES OF INDIANA JONES™ role-playing games, FGU's PSI WORLD™ game, the RINGWORLD™ system from Chaosium, Inc., Pacesetter's CHILL™ horror role-playing game, and West End Games' first role-playing system, the PARANOIA™ game. About the latter — the illustrations by Jim Holloway are alone worth the cost of the game, and be sure to have some emergency oxygen on hand when you look at them, as they are funnier than a nearsighted beholder with contacts.

Mention must also be made of the TOON™ cartoon role-playing game from Steve Jackson Games. Players take the roles of cartoon characters and act out the most bizarre and humorous adventures that can be dreamed up by the Animator (game referee). What more can be said?

TSR, Inc., captured the "most popular game modules" award, for the *Avengers™ Assembled!* module for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game and for the current DRAGONLANCE module series. Bruce Nesmith's *Avengers* handiwork was being read by gamers in dark theatres, in crowded hallways, under tables, in restrooms, etc. It seemed like everyone and his dog had a copy of it. The DRAGONLANCE modules were equally visible among the crowd and drew very favorable responses from all who saw them. Go, Tasslehoff!

FASA Corporation produced a large number of new minigames and boardgames connected with the STAR TREK® role-playing game and with their license for *The Last Starfighter* movie. Other game companies added new companion volumes and accessories for their lines, as well. All in all, it was a rich haul.

Black leather and road warriors

Just a side note about costumes. Only a few people wore outrageous outfits at the convention. Several road warriors and Dr. Who clones were about, mingling with the usual crowd of elves, clerics, and wizards. Most of us were pretty straight, however. At least in appearance. Some of us at the TSR booths started to weird out and make strange noises as Sunday rolled along, but emergency psychiatrists were able to handle the situation. I should be released from the ward by the time you read this.

Amazing news!

Those who stopped by the Dragon Publishing booth discovered that free copies of AMAZING® Magazine were being given away by the delighted personnel there. It seems that a TV series called "Amazing Stories," licensed from TSR, Inc., will be airing in the fall of 1985, directed by Steven Spielberg (hear that? STEVEN SPIELBERG, as in *E.T.*) on the NBC network. The show will be very much like the old "Twilight Zone" and "Night Gallery" shows, presenting the best in fantasy, science-fiction, and horror for viewers to sink their teeth into.

In addition, AMAZING editor George Scithers, four-time winner of the Hugo Award and famed expert on Conan and science-fiction in general, was on hand to answer questions and look respectable. Assistant AMAZING editor Patrick Price, winner of the Rudest-

Person-To- Ever-Come-From-Indianapolis Award and expert on rejecting bad manuscripts, was also on hand to help with questions and advice.

By the way, if you stopped by the Dragon Publishing booth, you also discovered that Kim Mohan is a guy (he was the tall one with the sunglasses and heavy beard), that Roger Moore was *not* the one you saw in the James Bond film clips that Victory Games was showing, and that S&T® Magazine is still alive and kicking hard (military gamers take note!).

The RPGA™ Network members meeting

We come at last to the RPGA Network members meeting on Saturday night. The meeting was hosted by Penny Petticord, notorious secret descendant of Baba Yaga and current owner of the Hut. Special guest star was E. Gary Gygax, who discussed role playing and his current interests in the gaming field. Other important people on the scene were Mary "POLYHEDRON™ Newszine" Kirchoff, James "GAMMA WORLD® Game" Ward, Doug "KNIGHT HAWKS" Niles, and Harold "Monster cards just aren't profitable" Johnson.

Gary Gygax gave out special awards to those who participated in the adventure he ran for the winners of last year's membership contest, and oversaw an informal question-and-answer session with the audience. I was left with the feeling that many people would give their right arms to find out how he runs the tracking ability for rangers in the AD&D® game (any chance for an article, Gary?).

Hmm. Some people had some comments and questions about DRAGON® Magazine at the meeting, and I got stuck for the answers. Well, here they are:

1. Kim Mohan and I discussed the possibility of putting new monster cards in the magazine, but frankly, this doesn't look very likely. The majority of magazine readers want to get modules for the AD&D® game, which are hard enough to get (see below under "module hunt"). Another problem is that the time and cost required to produce monster cards is very great: someone has to sit down, write out the copy for the back of the cards, and make sure it fits the card size. Lots of color art has to be generated for the cards, and this means tons of $$$. Now, we can afford some of the money, but not all of it. Monster cards are not very popular (as some of you may recall Harold Johnson pointing out).

All told, the monster card issue seems to be a dead one for now. Can't win 'em all.

2. The "ecology" series. You might want to send letters to us at the magazine (DRAGON Magazine, P.O. 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147) and tell us which monsters you want to see and how you want them presented. This is the only way we can serve you best, so write!

3. What happened to the "module hunt?" Well, it's a long story, but the short form of it is that we're being held up by technicalities through our legal department in responding to people. We want to ask that people stop sending in module ideas for the time being, as we are swamped with them and haven't even been able to get back to those who've written to us. Please be patient! We'll try to get some answers and get things straightened out as soon as possible.

There, that should hold you. Seriously, if you have any questions about DRAGON Magazine, just write to us. We read all the mail we get. Then we eat it.

Auction! Auction!

A stunning array of items, including two samurai swords, a German WW II helmet, and a papier-mâché replica of Dr. Who's TARDIS booth were sold to an auditorium full of eager gamers during the convention. Exhausted workers on the scene reported an all-time record number of items went on the block, numbering well over 10,000. A superb performance was delivered by Frank "Who'll gimme a dollartwodollarsthreedollarsfourfivedollars—" Mentzer and Tom "Dungslinger" Champeny, who bulldozed their way through more old copies of DRAGON Magazine and battered boardgames than you could shake a ten-foot pole at.

Remarkably, someone was able to purchase a copy of DRAGON issue #10 for only $22. You lucky son-of-a-gun!

Miniature madness

During the convention, I stumbled into a large number of miniature wargames, ranging from pitched battles fought by dwarven and elvish armies against orcs and ogres to massed space battles between dozens of star cruisers, destroyers, battleships, and fighter craft. A number of referees were using computers to keep track of the action.

A friend of mine got to play in one of the "kill all Smurfs!" battles, and reported that his fireteam was destroyed by a humongous blue fellow acting as a sniper in a tower. Mutant Smurfs play rough. . . .

I would say more about the miniature battles; however, I only saw them on my way to and from the bathrooms and wasn't paying much attention to them at the time. Sorry.

The miniature dioramas were very nice this year, especially one of the prize winners — the battle on the planet Hoth from the STAR WARS™ saga, a superb and awe-inspiring shadowbox display showing an attack against an AT-AT Walker. Good going, I say.

Time Beavers, snoring, and naked women

If you decided that the above topics were so completely unrelated that only a psychotic person or a TSR artist would ever associate them together, then you were correct.

For the most part, the artists were well mannered and managed to restrain their primitive urges to hoot at women and draw on walls with spray cans. All of the TSR artists could be found hanging out at the art show or sitting next to the RPGA Network booth, and they gave a very impressive demonstration of their talents. The convention was much the richer for their presence.

The Strategist Club Awards

Though there was no Strategist Club banquet this year, the awards for best games were given out, and they were:

Most Outstanding Board Game: the DRAGONRIDERS OF PERN™ game by Mayfair Games Inc.

Most Outstanding Role-Playing Game: the JAMES BOND 007™ game from Victory Games, Inc. (I always did like Roger Moore.)

Most Outstanding Game, Open Category: LOST WORLDS™ booklets, Vol. 1-5, by Nova Game Design.

Most Outstanding Game Play-Aid: AD&D® Module I6, *Ravenloft*, by Tracy and Laura Hickman (see section on DRAGONLANCE™ drama above for more information on the infamous "Hickman sisters").

Most Outstanding Miniature Figure Line: 25mm DRAGON LORDS™ figures by Grenadier Models Inc.

Most Outstanding Gaming Magazine: DRAGON Magazine (with POLYHEDRON Newszine coming in a close second).

Everyone deserves a laurel and hardy handshake for their efforts. Thanks! And my special thanks to Jon Pickens, Skip Williams, and Phil Grisolia for filling in the blank spots.

Random bits of mental flotsam

Some general recommendations for those who plan to attend next year's convention:

1. Be nice to the GEN CON convention staff. If you think you had a hard time getting things worked out for the convention, you should've seen the frantic and superhuman effort put out by the staff, who fought to overcome renegade computer programs, insufficient staff size, long hours and lost sleep, irate phone calls, and long, long lists of credit card checks to make this convention the best one ever. Say something nice to the staffers and give 'em a break. They (and you) will appreciate it.

2. While you're at it, give a big hand to the Parkside Area Wargamers. PAW also puts out an enormous amount of energy in getting the on-site convention organized and coordinated. Thank you, too!

DISPEL CONFUSION

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®
Fantasy Adventure Game

D&D® Companion questions

DQ: It says in the rules that a magical net cannot be damaged except by fire or acid. Does this mean that it cannot be ripped by giant strength?
DA: The magic of the net prevents it from being ripped. If the DM feels that the captured creature is especially strong, he may allow the net a saving throw against being ripped.
DQ: I was reading the information about Clan Relics and the Keeper of a Relic, and the Clan-master. How does one develop a player character like these?
DA: These positions are always held by nonplayer characters. The positions are so vital to the clan that these characters do not adventure, and seldom leave their area.
DQ: In the section covering jousts, the rules state that all entrants must wear full plate mail and carry shields (AC 2). Is it possible to use magical armor or shield to have a better armor class?
DA: The presence of knights with magical armor would instantly be noticed. Those fighters would be forced to joust with knights of equal armor or magic.
DQ: Does an earth elemental have to have dirt to form, or can it appear and take the shape of rocks or sand?
DA: A large amount of loose earth must be present for the elemental to form.
DQ: With the elemental form potion, is it necessary to have the fire or water, etc., in the area to change into the form?
DA: Yes.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®
Fantasy Adventure Game

The following are AD&D® questions that were asked of E. Gary Gygax at the GEN CON® RPGA® Network members' meeting as remembered by a charter member present at the meeting.

ADQ: Is T2 ever going to come out?
ADA: The manuscript for the T2 module is finished and in the appropriate hands. No definitive date has been set for release, however.
ADQ: Some of the monsters in the AD&D books are pretty useless, and many are never seen in the modules. Is anything going to be done about this soon?
ADA: Work is being done to update and improve the FIEND FOLIO™ Tome. It is possible that all the monsters could be put in two big volumes: A-L and M-Z; but those plans are still at the discussion stage.
ADQ: At what level do dragons cast spells?
ADA: That is a function of the spell level that they can cast. If a dragon can use fourth-level spells, that is also the level of its ability. On the other hand, if the DM has a particularly old dragon, it is conceivable that the dragon could have attained a higher level of mastery, but the decision would be up to the DM.

gamma WORLD®
Science Fantasy Game

GWQ: Can the Illusion Generation mutation create images that the mutant isn't familiar with or hasn't seen?
GWA: Because the illusions work with sight, sound, and smell, it is impossible for the mutant to dream up things to throw at its enemies. The mutant would have to have seen or experienced the thing it was sending.
GWQ: My players are trying to tell me that with the Thought Imitation mutation their characters can attack with their own powers and, in that same melee turn, use "mimicked mental powers." Is this correct?
GWA: No, characters can either use their natural powers or the Thought Imitation ability, not both.
GWQ: How can the oil of the barl neps be used without hurting the character trying to use it?
GWA: The character has to be resistant to radiation in some way. This is possible through mutation, by wearing special radiation-resistant suits or by using a mutation that allows for working with things at a distance.
GWQ: I can understand the creation of groups like the cryptic alliances, but I can't understand the reason for making groups like the Friends of Entropy. They don't seem to serve any useful purpose.
GWA: There is an old Chinese saying, "May you live in interesting times." The destructive groups among the alliances are there to present interesting times to the characters. They are the enemies that must be beaten at all costs.
GWQ: I had a Stage V I.D. and was attacked by a security robot. I argued that the I.D. should have protected me, and my referee said the I.D. didn't matter.
GWA: Although the Stage V I.D. is good against most robots, if the security robot that you faced was crazed or programmed to respond to unusual types of identification, then you are out of luck. The I.D.s can't get you everywhere, but they will help in 90% of the areas that require them.
GWQ: Is the poison of the herkel strong enough to hurt the herkel?
GWA: The poison dealt out by any creature will hurt that creature.

Gangbusters™
1920s Adventure Game

GBQ: Can you have a character with more than one class? My character started out as a criminal and successfully committed a robbery or two without being caught. Then he was offered a chance to join the police force as a rookie and decided to become a cop. Since then, he has started a "protection racket" amongst the store owners on his beat. They pay him a certain amount of money per month, or else he sends some small-time thugs to beat them up and trash their stores. (The thugs are criminals he has caught. He agrees not to arrest them for their crimes if they do these assignments for him.)

On the other hand, the character has successfully stopped many crimes during his career with the police force and brought a number of criminals to justice. Should he get experience only as a cop for his law enforcement activities, only as a criminal for his illegal activities, or both (making him effectively a dual-class)?
GBA: Your character is effectively a corrupt policeman. The judge can award experience for both "careers" independently for as long as the character is able to maintain both. Experience for police functions (arresting criminals, closing down stills, etc.) is awarded normally, but the character is not entitled to the 10% experience bonus for being an honest cop. Criminal experience points are awarded for whatever profit

the character makes from illegal activities (as per racketeering). The character's income from his policeman's salary may *not* be counted toward criminal experience points.

Be aware, however, that your character is attempting something very dangerous by trying to walk on both sides of the law at once, and could find himself in some rather uncomfortable situations. In a well-run campaign, the game judge will use the character's unique position to create encounters. For example, the city where the character is operating doubtlessly already has an organized crime syndicate operating within its bounds. The syndicate also runs protection rackets and will hear of the character's activities when it sends representatives to threaten the same store owners who are paying off your character. The syndicate will not appreciate the competition from an independent, so your character will be confronted and forced either to stop his protection racket or join the organized crime syndicate. If he opts for the latter, the syndicate will then have a member on the police force and will expect to gain advantages from this. They will force the character to cover up their criminal activities, arrange for the escape of syndicate members from police custody, inform the organization of impending raids on their operations, misdirect investigations, and so forth.

As time goes on, it will become increasingly more difficult to keep the law enforcement agencies from finding out about your character's involvement with organized crime, especially if the F.B.I. is called in to investigate the incidents. If your character is caught by the police or F.B.I., your character will almost certainly go to prison for a very long time and will lose all law enforcement rank previously gained (the police will not protect a fellow officer involved with racketeering or organized crime). If your character fails to protect the syndicate's activities, they will take appropriate vengeance on your character for his failure. You will have to play extremely well to avoid being caught.

STAR FRONTIERS™ Science-Fiction Game

SFQ: What is a "deranged maintenance robot"? Does it have damage to its interior, exterior, or neither?
SFA: The robot might have become "deranged" from a malfunction caused by improper removal of a security lock or an unsuccessful attempt to alter its function or mission, which caused it to go "haywire." (See Malfunction Table on page 15.)

Alternatively, the robot could have become deranged because of damage to its programming, circuits, or memory at the referee's option.

SFQ: Can you attach a laser rifle, laser pistol, or any beam weapon to a parabattery or power generator to fire?
SFA: A technician could conceivably juryrig a connection to drain power for a weapon from a parabattery or other power source temporarily, but weapons are not made to handle that kind of power input. After a turn or two, the "feedback" from the power source would certainly overload the circuits and damage the weapon beyond repair. Such a desperate measure should be attempted only in a case of dire emergency.

SFQ: If an animal has 150 STA points (reduced to 90 through combat), can a tangler grenade hold it still? If so, could it still fight back?
Ability to break loose from tangler treads depends on the creature's current stamina rating. A creature of which its STA has been reduced from 150 to 90 through wounds will be held if it fails its avoidance roll just as a creature of which its STA was originally 90 would. As for fighting back, a creature held in a tangler grenade cannot use a ranged weapon at all. However, if you are foolish enough to close with it before knocking it out, there is no reason it could not try to hit you back in melee combat — which would probably entangle you in the threads as well.

SFQ: Can you fire a pistol with shock gloves on?
SFA: Yes, provided you turn the gloves off first.

SFQ: My character captured a maintenance robot, and I would like to know what it can or can't do.
SFA: It can't do anything except perform the functions for which it was programmed until a technician successfully alters its mission and functions. At that point, you have a device with all the intelligence of a large toaster-oven, but it can move and carry things. You will have to negotiate what it can be programmed to do with your referee, but do try not to give it functions which require making decisions or responding to changing circumstances.

TOP SECRET® Espionage Game

TSQ: If you suffer a permanent loss, can it be made up by using experience points to restore the trait to normal?
TSA: Permanent blindness or deafness cannot be cured with experience points, but character traits that are permanently reduced by damage can be raised by spending experience just as any other trait can. Such losses are called "permanent" because they will not repair themselves with time or healing the way other damage will; but they can be rebuilt, just like the strength in a damaged limb can be rebuilt with physical therapy.

TSQ: Does the Charm score reflect the character's looks?
TSA: Looks are part of it, but the Charm score is a measure of how favorably other people will react to the character, so it covers much more than just appearance. A given individual could be rather homely but still have more charm than an attractive person due to a good sense of humor, elegant manner, good taste, and so forth. Looks aren't everything — your actions are part of your overall charm, too.

TSQ: Why does a 5th-level agent get less experience than a 1st-level agent for the same job?
TSA: Experience values for jobs decrease as agent level increases. A 1st-level agent is very "green." When he accomplishes a mission successfully, he is awarded a large amount of experience because he is considered to have "learned" a great deal. But by the time the agent is 5th-level, he has carried out that same type of mission many times. Theoretically, he does not learn as much from doing it anymore, so it is worth less experience. The 5th level agent gets paid more for the mission than does the 1st-level agent, though, because the employers know that he is experienced and can do it right.

A character can go from first level to second level after only a few missions, but it takes longer to make the next level jump, and longer still to make the next. With each new level the agent's personal trait scores will improve, so the character fights more effectively. In short, it becomes easier to accomplish missions, so you have to accomplish more of them to get the same reward.

TSQ: If a character had martial arts skill and used a knife to attack someone, which table should be used?
TSA: Knife fighting. The player must choose whether to attack with the knife or to throw it away and use martial arts — you can't do both at once. A character wishing to use a weapon in HTH combat is limited to attacking on the table corresponding to that weapon. For example, a character attacking with a knife *must* use the Knife Fighting Table, regardless of whether or not he is capable of using other types of combat.

TSQ: In Untrained Combat, could an agent make a blow and hold in the same phase?
TSA: Yes, but that takes both allowable actions for the phase, so the agent could not use any defenses.

TSQ: Why weren't heavy weapons (such as rocket launchers) included in the rules?
TSA: Those are military weapons. Most secret agents don't carry rocket launchers around in their pockets — at least not if they care about being subtle. Even rifles are hard to explain to the local authorities, let alone rockets! Remember: this is not a military role-playing game, but rather one of spies and espionage that emphasizes action on a personal level. A few heavy weapons may be included in future products as the need arises, but their usefulness for espionage is limited.